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FORTY YEARS AN EVANGELIST

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GIPSY SMITH



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# FORTY YEARS AN EVANGELIST

BY  
GIPSY SMITH

*Author of* "REAL RELIGION," "EVANGELISTIC TALKS,"  
"THE LOST CHRIST," ETC.

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FORTY YEARS AN EVANGELIST. III

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# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. LOOKING BACKWARD. MY DEBT TO MY WIFE. WHAT I OWE MY FATHER . . . . .	9
II. MY LOVE OF NATURE. MY GARDEN. THE LESSONS OF THE WOODS . . . . .	25
III. ABOUT MY OWN PEOPLE. THE ORIGIN OF THE GIPSIES. ARE THEY ONE OF THE LOST TRIBES? . . . . .	37
IV. PREACHERS I HAVE MET . . . . .	52
V. SOME MORE MINISTERIAL FRIENDS . . . . .	69
VI. MEMORIES OF GENERAL BOOTH. SOME DISTINGUISHED SCHOLARS AND LAYMEN . . . . .	85
VII. AFTER FORTY YEARS. A WONDERFUL TOUR . . . . .	101
VIII. COVERING FAMILIAR GROUND . . . . .	116
IX. WANTED: GODLY MOTHERS. SOME PATHETIC STORIES. SOME GLEAMS OF SUNSHINE . . . . .	126
X. MY AMAZING YEARS WITH "THE BOYS." MIXING JESUS WITH THE COFFEE. UNCONVENTIONAL SERVICE. THE SPIRIT THAT WON THE WAR . . . . .	137
XI. MORE STORIES FROM THE WAR. LITTLE LESSONS FROM GREAT LIVES. THE SOLDIERS' PRAYERS . . . . .	154

CHAPTER	PAGE
XII. TYPICAL AMERICAN CAMPAIGNS. THE GREAT SCENES IN LOUISVILLE AND NASHVILLE. AN AMERICAN INTERVIEW . . . . .	169
XIII. MORE AMERICAN EXPERIENCES. A WORD ABOUT THE COLOURED PEOPLE. SOME CHEERFUL STORIES. A BIT OF AMERICAN JOURNALISM . . .	180
XIV. A NOTE ON PROHIBITION. A MEMORABLE SCENE AT ST. LOUIS . . . . .	199
XV. HAPPY MEMORIES FROM MANY QUARTERS . . . . .	206
XVI. A WORD ABOUT REVIVAL. THE PLACE OF THE PRAYER MEETING. THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD . . . . .	226
XVII. SOME STORIES GRAVE AND GAY. CRITICS AND ANONYMOUS CORRESPONDENTS. DOWN IN THE MINE . . . . .	239
XVIII. THE NEED OF THE PRESENT. THE HOPE OF THE FUTURE. . . . .	254

FORTY YEARS AN  
EVANGELIST



# FORTY YEARS AN EVANGELIST

## CHAPTER I

LOOKING BACKWARD.—MY DEBT TO MY WIFE.—  
WHAT I OWE TO MY FATHER.

My wife often says, "Rodney, your life story has only one fault: it gets longer."

I cannot deny it. It is all too true! This I will say, I have told the story thousands of times in public, yet the wonder of it grows upon me with every passing year. Once a good West Country Methodist, referring to me in a prayer meeting, prayed fervently, "Keep'n low, Lord! Keep thy young servant low. Keep'n low!" I trust the prayer has been answered. It is in no egotistical spirit, but with a very humble heart that I would look back upon my crowded, and in a sense romantic ministry of nearly half a century.

The time of life at which such reminiscences as these are written has been described as "the dotty age." I refuse to be called old. Candidly, I do not like to have the word "veteran" applied to me. I hope I shall be good enough to die young.

The other day I met a man in Plymouth who said, "Aye, when your father was down here we had a glorious time! I used to work with your father."

"Which father?" I asked.

"Your father, of course."

"Well," I said, laughing, "that father was myself."

"Oh!" cried my friend, "How is it you don't go grey?"

"Ah," I replied, "you see it's good soil!"

Hundreds of times old friends have greeted me with the same question, and I have replied, "I don't dye daily!" I often offer to run a race with any young man in my audience after a meeting—if only he will give me start enough! But if my hair does go grey, I pray that it may go grey in the Master's service.

At the moment of writing, I am about to pay my twenty-first visit to America, and on my return I hope to be privileged to conduct another campaign in my own beloved land. I thank God that after forty-five years of continuous preaching and travelling my strength has been so wonderfully preserved, and that I am still an incorrigible optimist. As I often tell young people, I have never found that high spirits and true religion are incompatible. I am no kill-joy. I dislike intensely the modern craze for "jazz," but I will still hop, skip and run with the youngest. I am sometimes told I make people laugh too much in church. If only they knew how much I kept back, they would forgive me for what I do say. In this book you will find much that is deeply serious, but also, I hope, a little sunny humour. Thank God for all clean, healthy laughter, even if it is heard in church! I am glad when my audiences can laugh. There is, I believe, as much religion in a happy laugh as in a teardrop. A happy laugh is the blossom of a thought, and a smile is the perfume. I do not think much of those who are afraid to let their laugh out where the Lord will see them, in church or anywhere else. If anybody comes to my house in Cambridge

and fails to laugh in the first ten minutes, I begin to wonder whether my wife ought to lock up the spoons. I feel that God wants us to be happy when the sun is in us. The sun is the greatest artist in the world. The sun painted every flower. The sun tips the hill-tops with colour and floods the valley with joy. The sun paints glorious landscapes. The sun makes the kittens play, and the lambs skip, and the robin call, and it puts the bloom on your cheeks—when it is real. And just what the sun is in the natural world, the joy of the Lord is in the spiritual world. "Open wide the door, and let the blessed sunshine in."

"Forty years an evangelist!" How proud I am of the title. At one of my meetings in America I asked the children what they thought a gipsy was. A little girl got up and said, "Please, sir, a wanderer." I said, "Try again." A boy shouted, "A horse trader!" I said, "Not necessarily." A little girl said, "Please, sir, one who tells fortunes." I said, "Not necessarily. You know all that sort of thing is nonsense, don't you?" Then a boy got up and cried, "I know! A gipsy is a man that swipes (steals) kids!" "No," I said, "that's a tale they tell naughty boys." Then a little girl said timidly, "Please, sir, a good preacher!"

Now, I have never pretended to be a great preacher. I cannot claim that I was born to be a preacher. The love of Christ simply forced its way out. The day after I was converted I was selling clothes' pegs, and I went to the house of a lady just outside Cambridge. She bought all I had. Then I felt I must sing "Who'll be the next to follow Jesus?" As I sang, the lady and her daughter were in tears. I was terribly frightened, and ran away. Twenty-five years later, when conducting a mission at Hastings, I met that lady in a fashionable drawing-room.

She said, "After you ran away, my daughter said, 'If a gipsy boy can love Jesus like that, I must.' " It appeared I pointed her to Christ that morning. That was how I began my ministry.

To-day, I am still on the Wesleyan Methodist plan as a local preacher—but not very often "local!" Once I went to preach at a beautiful Gothic church with a spire, and found it was announced that special sermons would be preached by "the Rev. Rodney Smith." They thought, I expect, the "Gipsy" would not go with the spire! It was the sort of place where one froze in the vestry. A solemn official came in, and held out a piece of paper. "Here, dear brother, is our order." I replied, "I think you had better go for your holidays. I was born in a field, you see, and I refuse to be put in a flower-pot."

I held his programme in my hand.

"Has this brought you what you want?" I asked.

"No."

"Tear it up then," I said, "and let God take a hand. I am going to preach God's Gospel whether you like it or not. I am here with the word of God, with 'Thus saith the Lord in my soul.' "

He looked at me, but said nothing.

I may say frankly I never cared to have the prefix "Rev." applied to me. For more than forty years I have been known as Gipsy Smith.

It may be interesting to some of my friends to know just how the name was given to me. When I began to preach in 1877 my father, Cornelius, and my two uncles, Woodlock and Bartholomew, were preaching the gospel, mainly in London and East Anglia, and they were known far and near as "the three Gipsy brothers," or "the three converted Gipsies." They were always advertised in one

of those two ways. To be distinguished from them when I began I was known and advertised as "Rodney Smith, the Gipsy boy." After a time my Christian name was dropped, and I became known simply as "the Gipsy boy." When my boyhood was being left behind the "boy" was dropped, and I was generally referred to by the press and the public as "Gipsy" Smith. I had nothing to do with the conferring of the name. I was the first to be called "Gipsy Smith." When my two uncles died, my father insisted upon being known as Gipsy Cornelius Smith, and if he went to preach at a place where he was not known he always began by saying, "Please understand I am not my son. He is 'Gipsy Smith,' and I am his father." I have a brother, Ezekiel, who preaches, and I have a son who is known in America as Gipsy Smith, Junior; but I think it is only fair to state clearly that I was the first to preach as "Gipsy Smith," and that is the title I have proudly borne for forty years.

Great scholars have been among my dearest friends. I have never despised learning—God forbid! But looking backward I cannot indulge in idle tears over my lack of scholastic training. I have heard of a seven-year-old laddie who was asked how he liked going to school. "Oh," said he, "I like going well enough, sir, and I like coming back, too. What I hate is staying cooped up there between times." I fear I should have had a great sympathy with that boy, but I never knew what it was to be "cooped up between times." Perhaps my ministry would have been improved by a knowledge of Latin and Greek, Euclid and Algebra, and all those other delightful things I missed when I was wandering in the woods; I do not know. I do know that Jesus took what little knowledge I gained in after years, and used it to His glory.

I wish I knew the name of the lady who presented me with my first Bible. I never heard it. Once I mentioned her in the course of an address in America. Afterwards a lady rang me up on the telephone, and asked me if I could not tell her who the donor of that Bible was. I replied that it was impossible. "I think I would have given my two arms," she said impulsively, "to have been that woman." It was from that Bible and from a little dictionary that I first learned to read. When I began preaching I could not manage the long words. I was not going to let my congregation know that. How did I get over the difficulty? I can afford to give away the secret now. I just read what I could. When I came to the difficult words I stopped, and made some comment upon the passage by way of exposition. Then I began to read again—on the other side of the obstruction!

When, years after, I began seriously to study at Hanley, my chief reading, apart from the Bible, consisted of sermons by Wesley, Dr. Parker, Dr. McLaren, Robertson of Brighton, and Spurgeon, Matthew Henry's Commentaries and Rev. Charles Finney's "Lectures on Revivals," "Lectures to Professing Christians," and "The Way of Salvation."

One of the chief sources of helpfulness to me was the privilege of practically living with preachers. When I could get in a group of them I would start a discussion of some subject on which I knew very little. My mind was quick to assimilate, and after about an hour's talk I knew almost as much as they did. I can only illustrate the way in which I developed by saying that if you go through the woods at a certain time of the year when the seeds of the wild plants are ripe you come out with your clothes covered. They stick to you. I came through books and

conversations like that. I never missed an opportunity of seizing hold of anything that was likely to be useful to me.

When I first began preaching, however, I could not spell my name, and with those two books, the Bible and the Dictionary, I taught myself all I knew. I was preaching long before I could write a letter. Indeed, I had started sweethearting before I could write a letter. When I embarked on that important business I said to myself, "I shall have to learn to write now!" and I printed the first letter just as I found the letters in my Bible. I thought, "This will never do. I can't keep on like this." So I got an old-fashioned copy book with a copy on the top. The first line I wrote, under the copy, wasn't so bad, but when I got to the bottom I could not read what I had written, it was so unlike the copy.

I know all too well how far I am to-day from the copy. Yet I discovered long ago that if I could not be clever, and if I could not be a great preacher, I could be good, and loyal, and true. It is goodness that unlocks the doors. A preacher may be described in the press a thousand times as "Sustaining his reputation by a magnificent sermon." It is only his personal goodness that really counts.

Looking back over the years, I have never been ashamed to tell the world that I once sold clothes' pegs. Indeed, I glory in the fact. I tell my meetings of business men that I used to be a traveller in the timber trade, and if I had had their chances, I would have made my way in the world!

I remember a meeting I attended in a village not long ago at which I mentioned the fact that I went from door to door hawking the pegs. An old lady in the front row jumped up, and cried, "It ain't everyone who would say

a thing like that. I bought some of 'em off him!" "Did you, mother?" I said. "Aye," she replied, "and they was good'uns!"

In my home hangs a painting of the country lane in which my dear mother died, showing the humble gipsy encampment, and never do I look at it without saying to myself, "What hath God wrought!" Sometimes when I think of the wild life of my early years, of my conversion in the little chapel at Cambridge (long disappeared), of my first experiences of preaching in the Salvation Army, then known as the Rev. William Booth's Christian Mission, and of my subsequent ministry at Hanley, my happy work as a missionary of the National Free Church Council, and my great campaigns at home and abroad, it all seems like some romantic piece of fiction. I pinch myself to see if I am dreaming. Environment was against me. I had few friends. I had no education. Until I was seventeen I never knew what it was to sleep in a house. Yet God took an untutored lad from the woods and used him as His messenger on five continents. I do hope no one will call this vain boasting. I simply state a fact which fills my own soul with amazement. To God be all the praise!

When I sit and think of the early days, the death of my mother is, of course, an outstanding memory. The pathos and the poignancy of that loss came home to me in after years as it could not do when I was but six years old. All through my life I have longed for a mother's love. I have peered again and again into the faces of mothers who have listened to me, and have wondered: Was my mother like that? I cannot remember her features distinctly, yet I am perfectly sure that I shall know her when we meet in Heaven.

When I look back upon these crowded years, one of

the things of which I think with deepest gratitude is naturally the devotion, the unfailing help and sympathy of my wife and family. I cannot express what I owe to them. When at Whitby, at the early age of nineteen, I wedded Miss Pennock, daughter of Captain Pennock, of the Mercantile Marine, neither of us had any idea what a strange, adventurous life ours was to be. I was a somewhat impetuous, but very enthusiastic young evangelist. The organisation with which I was connected was encountering in those days fierce opposition. The Army uniform was not popular. More than once I was abused by a hostile crowd. When my wife and I first went to the Potteries we had difficulty in finding a lodging. At recent crowded meetings all over the country when kindly messages and affectionate messages have been sent to Mrs. Smith, there has flashed across my mind the picture of the old circus at Hanley in which she smilingly held a candle while I and others prepared for our first service by sweeping from the ring-pulpit a mass of accumulated refuse. In the stormiest and most difficult days my wife was ever at my side with her help and encouragement, calm, practical, confident, self-effacing. She has accompanied me upon many of my travels abroad, and everywhere has made a host of friends. In the last twenty years, however, I have spent about fifteen years away from my home, and frequently have had to leave my wife for months at a time, and the constant sacrifice of such a companionship is not a thing to be lightly spoken of. I shall never know in this world how much of any success I have attained has been due to my wife, to her beautiful Christian life, to her unselfish devotion, her readiness to let me take up any work to which the Master called me.

My wife, by the way, had the unenviable distinction of

being one of the few people the report of whose death was "greatly exaggerated." When I was touring the world in 1894 she was taken ill, and I was summoned home. It was announced in an Australian paper that my wife had died, and there was actually a memorial service for her in an Adelaide church. The "news" was published in England, and I received hundreds of letters of condolence,—to all of which Mrs. Smith replied. There are people who still think I am a widower. There are others who will have it, despite all contradiction, that I married a second time. Sometimes I have been told by the busy know-alls that I have contracted an alliance with some very wealthy American lady! The simple fact is that "Annie" is the "one and only original," for forty-five years my helpmeet and home maker. When I was at Newcastle recently Dr. Wardle Stafford said of her, "A more kindly or gracious Christian lady I have never known"—a tribute which pleased me far more than any compliment ever paid to me at a welcome meeting.

In looking backward I remember, too, with gratitude the many years' companionship of "our faithful Lizzie," Miss Parkes, whose devoted assistance in my home covers practically the whole period of which I write. Her ungrudging service and unfailing sympathy have been simply invaluable.

I am anxious before I go a line further to acknowledge my incalculable debt to my father. The longer I live, the more I thank God for him. The story of my mother's death in the gipsy encampment, of my father's conversion, and of the influence that that event had upon five motherless children is always fresh to me. There is no story I love so much to tell the world. It was my father—that big, rough, strong man who could be so gentle, and so

tender—who first taught me the meaning of the love of God in Jesus Christ. All that I have been able to do in the world is due, under God, to him. He was the dearest father and the best companion and chum that any boy ever had. He lived next door to me at Cambridge for fifteen years. When I was at home I was in his house before breakfast, and in and out all day long. I was six thousand miles away when a cable came to say he had joined mother.

Before I left for America I went in to see him, and I said, "Now, Daddy, I leave very early in the morning. You must not get up, I will see you in bed." But next morning at 7:30 a. m. he was up and dressed and sitting in his old arm-chair. I knelt before him, as I had done scores of times, and he put his hands on my head. I said, "Daddy, you will present me to the Throne every day I am away, won't you?" He said, "My dear, I presented you there years ago, and I have never taken you away." When I said good-bye, he said, with a smile, "We'll meet Yonder."

I could fill this volume with the stories that crowd upon me as I think of him. Since he died the world has not been the same to me. After living in Manchester for fourteen years, I went to Cambridge, where he lived. I wanted to show my children where we used to camp, and where the old tent used to stand. From my study window I can see as I write the elm trees waving in the breeze, where the tents stood in the shade. On my desk by my side is an old knife, almost worn to the back, with which my father made clothes' pegs. No money in the world would induce me to part with that precious relic. Whenever I go home from a great campaign I use it to cut off the wild shoots that have begun to grow in my heart; in

the spirit of Paul's advice to the Ephesians, "Wherefore, remember."

There are many living to-day who recollect hearing my father and my uncles in their missions; I have been meeting them in all parts of the country. The story of my father's conversion will be familiar to many readers. Someone has said that it reads like a page out of Wesley's journal. It was a long struggle before peace came. The actual event took place in a little mission hall in Latimer Road, London. In the agony of his soul, my father fell on the floor unconscious, and lay there for nearly half an hour. It was thought that he was dead, but presently he came to himself, stood up, and leaping, exclaimed joyfully, "I'm converted!" He could neither read nor write at that time, but it was not long before he had learned his letters and could read the New Testament. With his brothers, Bartholomew and Woodlock, he conducted missions in many places, and thousands were led to God through his instrumentality.

Oh, the pictures of my father that I see! I have seen him in his wild days take a policeman and a gamekeeper and shake them until they were sorry they had ever met him. He was a giant. Yet, when he came home to his motherless children on that great day, how changed! The devil had been taken out of him. The lying had been taken out, the stealing taken out, sin taken out. All this had come at one master stroke of Christ. He came to his motherless children that night and called us all by name to come to him. I can see him now; I can see his fast-falling tears and hear the music of that dear old voice.

"Don't be afraid of me," he said. "God has sent your father home a new creature." He gathered the five of us to him, and put his big strong arms about us and, falling

on his knees, prayed. That prayer made me what I am now, and made possible what I am doing to-day. All my service began with that.

One scene comes before me now more vividly than ever before. The morning after my father was converted he felt so wonderfully changed inside that he thought his flesh must have changed. There was a little mirror hanging up in the gipsy wagon, and he asked my sister to hand it down to him. There were five children watching him curiously. We did not know anything about conversion. None of us could read. We had never seen a Bible. There was not a Bible in the tent. We did not know such a book existed, and if there had been millions of them in the wagon we could not have read one of them. My father took that old mirror outside the wagon, and there were five dark heads still watching him. He looked at himself this way and that way, and then he rolled up his sleeves, and I remember, as though it were but yesterday, his saying, "Is *this* old Cornelius Smith?"

Once when my father was preaching in the open air at Leytonstone, a coster passing by in his donkey cart shouted, "Go it, old party! You'll get half a crown for that job." "No, young man, you're wrong there," replied my father. "My Master never gives half crowns away. He gives whole ones. You be faithful unto death, and He will give you a crown of life." How true that was in his own case!

My father retained all his faculties until a few days before his death, which occurred when he was in his 91st year. Up to the last he greeted visitors with his cheery, "Come in, my dear." He took the keenest interest in everything, loved to talk of the old days, and above all else, of his Saviour's love.

Once he was holding my hand in the darkness in a cab going home after service. I asked him what he thought of the service.

"Sonny," he said, "I seemed to know all you were going to say to-night before it was ever said."

"Daddy," I replied, "you didn't know your boy that used to sell clothes' pegs for you would ever be a preacher, did you?"

"No, I never knew it then."

"You never thought that I would be living to save the souls of men, did you?"

"No," he said, "I never dreamed of that. My one desire was that God would make you good, and then I knew the rest would be right."

About a year before my father died, my cheerful gardener, Pearson, and I were gathering his apples. When we carried the last basket to him we said, "There's your last apples for this year." "My dear," he said, with a twinkle in his eye, "the Lord has got basket upon basket full of apples stored away behind that bark. They are all there, hidden away from us. Next year they will come out rosy and ripe just when we need them." He was always saying striking things. Once he remarked to me, "I have been thinking to-day about that text, 'Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.' You see, it is *engraven*. It can't be rubbed out. It was the nails that did that. If you want to get rid of the name you must cut the hand off. As long as the hand is there, the dear Lord is going to remember me!"

Even if I went in to see my father twice in the morning, once during dinner to see how he was getting on with that, and once or twice during the afternoon, if I had a late meeting in the evening and did not see him until break-

fast time the next morning his greeting would always be, "Hallo, *Stranger!*"

I shall never forget how happy he was when, with the beginning of the present century, I preached at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in connection with the great Free Church Simultaneous Mission. "I tell you, my dear, I seemed to creep right into your waistcoat," he would say when we left a crowded meeting, rejoicing over the triumphs we had witnessed and praising God together over miracles of grace. Then there would flash across my memory pictures of such a different kind. I would see him—brave soul—isolated and almost friendless, risking his life to nurse his dear ones when they lay affected with small-pox in the lonely gipsy encampment. I would see him struggling against fierce temptation, groping for the light. I would see him sobbing over the flickering fire in the dead of night as if his heart would break, with his tears hissing as they fell in the flames, and I would picture that crowded little home, and the wide-eyed motherless children who lay around him. And as these almost incredible cinematograph pictures flickered on the screen of memory, I praised God, as I do unceasingly, for the life which began with so much storm, but which ended with such a glorious sunset. I have often said that to watch the Christian life of my father was like watching the unfolding of a magnificent June rose. The world was surely the richer because he lived. His three daughters and two boys all became preachers. One of the noblest things a man does this side of the gates of pearl is to take Christ home to his family, and one of the noblest things a woman can do in the world is to take Christ home to her family. My father is in the glory, and my life is very lonesome without him. He was such a com-

fort and benediction to me all my life—such a friend, such a companion! There was a fellowship I had with him that I could not have even with my wife or my children. I owe everything in the world to his beautiful life, and should never have done anything in the world worth while if my father had not brought Christ to my little, hungry heart.

## CHAPTER II

### MY LOVE OF NATURE.—MY GARDEN.— THE LESSONS OF THE WOODS.

WHEN I was a boy all the grasses and flowers and trees of the field and all living things were my friends and companions. As for the rabbits, I could write a whole chapter upon them! I have often said that when I was a lad they were so fond of me that they would go home with me! Even to-day when I am in the country I am always on the lookout for them, but it must be understood that they are less affectionate! In my boyhood I had a pair of famous pants, of which my brother said, "You can't tell whether you are going or coming!"—a now familiar joke which I believe I first put into circulation. There were times when that spacious nether garment was fur-lined. To-day, I shall not be suspected, but it does not seem forty years since an afternoon in the woods near Hanley, when a head-keeper courteously said good day to a respectable evangelist who did not tell him he was taking home a wild rabbit in one of his pockets!

In my boyhood I used to go to rest with the birds. I have taken my place on the limb of a tree, and watched things. If you want to know Nature you must live with her. I have been up there as quiet and as much at home with the birds as the birds themselves. I have fancied I heard them talking, and understood it. There would

be a little bird getting on a roosting-place, and he would say, "My twig, my twig," and down below would be a larger bird, and it would say, "My twig, my twig." And the big, solemn old rooks on the top, looking down would say, like a dignified Presbyterian elder, "*Quiet! quiet! quiet!*" I have been in the lovely woods when the leaves were bursting out, when the buttercups were breaking, when the primroses were in bloom, and the violets at my feet, when the hawthorn blossoms were putting on their bridal bouquet, and one felt that the Lord had smashed a rainbow into a million atoms and scattered its glories at one's feet. Nature made me an optimist. The world has got disappointed with many of us who profess to be Christians, and that is what makes it so pessimistic. A pessimist is a person who sees a difficulty in every opportunity. An optimist is a person who sees an opportunity in every difficulty. I was born an optimist, like I was born a boy, and people who want to be optimists should leave their bricks and mortar, and live out in the woods. Let the poor folks who dwell in the crowded streets of the city, and who think so much of jazz and other insatiating nonsense, come out with me, and live in God's woods, and I will teach them a few things. Come out where the birds sing, where the stars shine, where God's wind blows through the brain and soul, where the Eternities whisper the secret of the skies to you, and you will learn a great deal, which the city streets cannot teach you. I never talk to a rose when it is hanging in the garden without seeing a tear in its eye for me. It is always sympathetic. God's flowers are His thoughts in colours and perfumes. Somebody said to me the other day, "What do you call a butterfly?" I said, "God's flowers on the wing."

I was staying with a London family some time ago. It was a home of culture. I took something out of my pocket and I said to the young people, "What is that?" One of them said, "Why, that is an onion." I said, "No, it is not an onion, it is a bulb." If I were to show some of my city friends a bulb like that they would think it was an onion. That is about all they know about nature. "It is a bulb," I said. They said, "A bulb? What is that?" I said, "Have you a flower pot?" "Yes." I said, "Find me one. Have you any soil?" They said, "We have some in the back yard," and I said, "Have the pot filled with soil, and I will plant this for you."

I kept the crown just a tiny bit above the soil, and I dampened it. I said, "Keep that in the dark, don't drown it, just keep it damp and in the dark, until you see about half an inch of green above the surface, and then bring it to the light, and see what will happen." In time I had a letter saying, "Oh, Gipsy Smith, we have the most lovely white hyacinth you ever saw!" The hyacinth was in that bulb all the while; it only waited for the power of the water and of the soil. The power of God, co-operating with the soul, will make it pure and beautiful.

All Nature talks to me in this way. I have never gone in for sport to any great extent, though I have occasionally enjoyed watching a good football match, and in America last year I had a round or two of golf. My chief recreation has always been gardening, of which I can never tire. I love my garden at Cambridge. During the all too short periods of rest at home I have spent almost all of my time in it, revelling in its peace and beauty, enjoying the songs of the birds, studying their habits, getting to know them so that they came at my call.

Mr. Arthur Porritt, of the *Christian World*, in his

very entertaining book, "The Best I Remember," has a chapter in which he refers most kindly to my work. "Though very few professional evangelists have attracted me," he adds, "I have a very tender feeling and a very high regard for Gipsy Smith. He is *sui generis* and a man of fine quality of heart and spirit. His sincerity is beyond question, and he has none of that harsh censoriousness which always repels me in the ordinary type of evangelist. Gipsy Smith is pure Romany. It explains the poetry that oozes from him. And he is proud of his vagrant ancestry. He recalls zestfully his boyhood days in a caravan and takes as much pride in them as a blue-blooded aristocrat does in his sixteen quarterings. He has built himself a home at New Cherry Hinton, just outside Cambridge, and from his dining-room window he can see the spot across the fields where his father's van used to be pitched. Gipsy Smith at home is just as mesmeric a personality as Gipsy Smith addressing a big evangelistic meeting. A day I spent with him in his garden at Cherry Hinton comes freshly back to memory. All the birds knew him, and had no sort of fear of him. He hooked a mother bird off her brood in a nest built in one of the rose-covered arches, and while Gipsy played with the fledglings the hen bird, quite unperturbed, sat on a bough a yard away. As we sat smoking—at least I was smoking; Gipsy Smith has no vices—Gipsy ejaculated, 'Hallo, here's an old friend of mine come back!' It was a chaffinch that had forsaken Gipsy's garden that year, but was paying a visit to old scenes. From his jacket pocket Gipsy produced a scrap of food and in a minute or two the bird was perched on his wrist eating from his hand. With a low whistle Gipsy Smith drew the birds around him, very much like the old man who before the war used

to feed the sparrows in the Tuilleries gardens in Paris. And all that while he talked to them as St. Francis preached to the birds at Assisi."

Another journalistic friend published recently in *The Methodist Recorder* a lively interview with me, in which the writer said: "You must imagine him in his element in this model garden, chatting away more freely than he can ever do when in the rush and turmoil of one of his exhausting Missions. The talk goes something like this:—

*"The visitor:* What a perfectly lovely place!

*"The Gipsy:* Aren't those ferns beautiful? Mrs. Smith loves ferns, and prefers them to cut flowers in the house. Excuse me a moment. . . . Look, look! See her? (a beautiful blackbird sitting proudly in her nest in a hedge, with her beak in the air like a church spire in miniature). Don't go too near. She won't know you. They know when strangers are about, don't they, Pearson?

*"Pearson* (the gardener): That they do, sir! They know you all right! Why, one day the birds were all making such a noise that he come running out and says, 'Pearson, I know they're telling me there's danger somewhere.' 'I can't see anything, sir,' says I. 'But there is,' says he, and after peering about he finds a cat hidden close by, ready for a spring. Off goes the cat, and the birds, quite satisfied, stop giving the alarm and sound the 'All Clear', and all is quiet again!

*"The Gipsy:* Now what do you think of those? (A glorious little family of fluffy chicks, with a proud mother.) Aren't they beauties? And here's our poultry run. Yes. Rhode Island Reds, and just look at the gloss on those beautiful feathers! Eggs?—oh, plenty of them. It was not far from here, you know, that one day

I found a hen camping out in a ditch, with quite a fine nestful of eggs. Somehow those eggs got into the pockets of my wonderful new trousers. As I was crossing a ploughed field a man shouted—not at me, as I afterwards discovered—and while the wicked fled, where no man pursued, all those eggs broke. . . . I didn't 'find' any more! . . . . Why, there's my robin! I wonder what he's up to! Let's watch him. Hallo Bobby! Isn't that blossom beautiful? . . . You see the bridge we are about to cross? When I had been a specially good boy, my father used to let me come from the encampment at night and climb up there and let me look at the lights of the station. I used to stand there, wondering where all the red and green oil came from! . . . . Everything around here reminds me of those days. One winter when we were here we were very hard up, and had very little to eat. My father wondered what we were going to do for Christmas, but, while he was cheerily singing a gospel song to the effect that the Lord would provide, there was a knock at the door, and the Cambridge town missionary, Mr. Sykes, came to tell us that three legs of mutton and some groceries were waiting for us at a certain shop in the town. . . . Look! you see that house standing a little way back from the road? That's the house where Mrs. Robinson, the Baptist minister's wife, gave my sister Tilly and me the three plum puddings—and that big open space is where we tried to eat them. They were only half-cooked, you know, and after we had sampled two of the parcels we went home, sadder and wiser, with one only. Later on Mrs. Robinson asked my uncle Bartholomew how he enjoyed his pudding . . . I think I'll draw a veil over what happened. I haven't had much appetite for plum pudding since!"

When I was in France with "the boys," one afternoon I was taking a little walk just back of the line. I had sought that village just to be quiet for a few hours, to get away from the horror, from the murder and the blood, and the suffering and the tears, and the heartache and sighs that tore my heart to shreds, and I was in the company of a celebrated professor from Cambridge whose father had a world-wide reputation. We were walking in one of the lovely French woods, and we came across, in the centre of that wood, a mud-hole, just a little pool. We could have thrown a stick across it, it was so small in circumference. The water in it was as black as ink.

All around its sides it was fringed with bracken and autumn tinted, and the sun had cast that little pool into a black diamond and the surface of the mud-hole was covered with continents of purity, handfuls of glorious gems, and what do you think they were? They were water lilies, and their roots were in mud.

If God can bring lilies out of an inkpot, with their roots in black mud, if he can make little handfuls of purity enough to make angels thrill to the tips of their wings, He can make one's heart pure.

I was looking over my garden gate last summer, and I saw a teacher. She had her class of boys and girls out, and she was giving them a lesson in natural history. A little tiny boy picked up a wild flower—it was a daisy—and ran to his teacher with it, saying, "What is that, teacher?" She said, "Wait a minute, wait a minute while I look it up in my book!"

It is vision that is wanted. It is vision that makes all the difference. I have always been very fond of a story told by a friend of mine of a great naturalist and scientist who, one lovely summer's day, went out into

the highlands of Scotland with his microscope to study the heather-bell in all its native glory. In order that he might see it in its perfection he got down on his knees and without plucking the flower, adjusted his instrument and was soon revelling in its colour, its delicacy, its beauty, lost in wonder, love and praise.

How long he stayed there he does not know. Suddenly a shadow fell on him and on his instrument. He waited for a time, thinking it might be a passing cloud, but it stayed there, and presently he looked up over his shoulder and there was an old Highland shepherd, watching him. Without saying a word he plucked the little heather-bell and handed it with the microscope to the shepherd that he too might see the wonder that he was holding.

The old man put the instrument to his eye, put the heather-bell in its place, and looked at it till the tears ran down his face like bubbles on a mountain stream. Then handing back the little flower, very tenderly he said, "Ay mon, I wish ye had never shown me that. I wish I had never seen it." "Why?" asked the scientist. "Because," said the old man, "these rough feet have trodden on so many of them!"

I was in my garden the other day looking at a tiny little hedge sparrow's egg. Where did all that beautiful blue come from? How is it that such magnificent porcelain could be manufactured long before my artistic friends in the Potteries knew anything about the art? Oh, whatever God does, it is beautiful. When He paints the wings of the butterfly He puts on enough colour to send a painter crazy.

Heaven's mysteries cannot be explained. You do not understand the rosebud. You could dissect it, but you

cannot explain its perfume and its glory. You do not refuse to drink God's water when you are thirsty because ~~you cannot~~ analyse a rain drop. You do not know where the first grain of wheat came from, but that does not prevent you from eating good wholesome bread when you get a chance. I cannot explain all about it, but I saw my Master come into the woods around my tent, and take a little colour from the bluebell, a little from the primrose, a little from the hawthorn blossom, a little from the daffodil, a little from the pansy, and when He got all He wanted, He mixed the colours (and no one can mix colours like the Lord), He wove it into a scarf, and then He wrapped it around the shoulders of the shimmering storm, and you saw it all in a glorious rainbow!

How I love the springtide! How do I know when it is coming? Because here and there in my garden at Cambridge the primroses are coming through, the snowdrops are pushing up their heads, the daffodils are putting out their sword blades, the thrush is singing the song of an angel wrapped up in feathers. I can take you down some of the lanes where I used to camp as a boy, when the gates of spring open without a creak of the hinges, and the light breaks over the cliff-tops of Eternity and kisses the countryside into bloom and splendour and colour. Should I need somebody, then, to take a white-wash brush and paint on the hills, *This is spring?*

When God kisses a life into a new creation, no bonnet or uniform will be necessary to distinguish it. If you are anywhere near a field of clover on a May morning—well, you know it!

I have been out in the woods when the storm was raging and the wind whipping through the bare branches. I have heard the trees sing. How I love the trees! Put

your ear to the trunk of a tree, when the winds are blowing through the woods. Oh, how they sing to you! They sing to you of all the things that are made of trees, of all that comes out of the wood. They sing to you of rocking cradles and laughing babies; they sing to you of sombre coffins, and of man's last journey to the grave. They sing to you of Him who hung upon a tree. Have you ever been out in the woods when the primroses line the hedge-rows, and the bluebells spread their azure carpet underneath the trees? Have you ever listened in the woods to the sound of the little creatures who make them their home? Oh, Jesus loved the woods and the trees and the fields and the flowers!

In April last I stood in one of our English woods where I love to roam. Very often my wild gipsy heart in the midst of a multitude cries out, "O God for the woods!" I saw the trunk of an old tree with not a limb left, not even a bit of bark on it, standing amidst all that glory alone, with not even a bit of ivy clinging to it. It was in the midst of all that sunshine and poetry and music and life, and harmony and Heaven—Heaven in the woods. And I seemed to hear that old rotten, broken, dead trunk of a tree cry, "I don't believe in revivals." I looked at the old trunk and I said, "No, you are too dead to believe anything. That is where thousands of people in the Church are to-day. They are there without wedding garments, there without any life within."

You must go into the woods if you want to see beautiful things. That indeed is where you get all your beautiful things. We get all our pianos from the woods. We get all our organs from the woods. We get all our harps from the woods. We get our houses and our churches from the woods. And then in the woods we

put our ears to the trunk of an old oak, and we hear the strains of,

“When I survey the wondrous Cross  
On which the Prince of Glory died”

For if we had never had any woods, we should never have had any Cross. And look at the bluebells! When God sets the bluebells ringing on a May morning in the woods it is time to pray. Look at the primrose! Oh, the glory of our English primroses in the woods on a spring day! When God thinks an oak, you have an oak. When God thinks a daisy, you have a daisy. When God thinks a dew-drop, you have a dew-drop, a Crystal Palace in miniature, a fit place for Deity, so pure, so beautiful. And God wants us to be as beautiful as the woods on a spring day. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. They will see Him in the daisy, they will see Him in the dew-drop, they will see Him in the stars, they will see Him in the sunbeam, in the wind that caresses the brow. They will see Him in the morning light, and in the evening zephyr breeze.

When I write of the green and peaceful spots that are dear to me there is none on earth that holds my affection like the little lane, twenty miles away, in which my mother died. It has changed but little in half a century. Whenever I visit it, I can still see the old gipsy tent and wagons. Every inch of the ground is sacred to me. I often wish that I could fence it in and call the piece of land my very own.

One day I took some ivy from under the hedge, from the grassy, ivy-covered bank, close to the spot where my mother died. I wanted something in my garden

from that dear spot that was consecrated by her death, and I took the ivy, and planted it, and it is growing around some old stumps in the garden. I go and look at it, till I am a gipsy boy again and I am back in the lane where I lost my mother. On another day I took out of that bank an old root. A horticulturist would have known what it was, but the average person who did not possess a garden would have known nothing about it. I wrapped it up carefully in a piece of paper, and when I got home I took it out of the paper, and I said to my wife, "Annie, come here and look at this." She said, "Look at your fingers, they are dirty. Mind my blouse. What have you got there Rodney—an old dirty root?" I said, "Wait a minute. I'm going to plant this, I won't tell you what it is, but I want you to watch it when I am absent—watch it for my sake." I put it underneath a pear tree, on a little bit of a bank, which I knew would be sheltered from the northeast wind, but where it would catch the first kisses of the spring sunshine. And one day I received a letter from home, in April, and my wife said, "Rodney, where you planted that dirty old root, there is the most lovely bunch of primroses you ever saw."

The primroses were in the root all along; they only wanted the sunshine and the atmosphere. Many a man does not know what is in him. It only needs God to bring it out, and make possible the beautiful, noble and true. God can make him pure in heart. It is all there.

## CHAPTER III

ABOUT MY OWN PEOPLE.— THE ORIGIN OF THE  
GIPSIES.—ARE THEY ONE OF THE LOST TRIBES?

FOR many years I had a great desire to take the Gospel to my own people. In 1892, when I was in Edinburgh, the generosity of a lady who had been kindly interested in the spiritual welfare of Gipsies opened the way for the formation of the Gipsy Gospel Wagon Mission. Dr. Alexander Whyte became one of the directors, and my dear friend Mr. Collier found time to manage the mission, which in spite of many difficulties, accomplished much valuable work all over the country. Our first wagon missionary was Mr. Wesley Baker, an excellent evangelist who rendered some splendid service in the New Forest and in Blackpool.

God has led me into other work, and I have but rare opportunities of taking the Gospel to my people, but I often wish it was possible to do more for them. Evangelistic work among them is not easy. They know very well that if they become Christians, they must give up fortune telling. They are slow to take in the plan of salvation. For all that, I am anxious in season and out of season that my people should not be libelled. On the stage they are represented as villains. In the nursery they are made a sort of bogey. Once more I feel I must state the facts as I know them.

While I was living in Manchester, a famous French-

man who had studied and written of Gipsies, died, and his collection of writings was brought to England. He had written 500 pamphlets and books on the Gipsies, each one of them different. And one of them began: "We think we may venture to presume——" That is about as far as such investigators get, as a rule.

Our language is not uniform. As we crossed continents we lost some words, and we learned some new ones. Our word for "water" is the same as the Hindoo word for water. Our word for "lady" is the same as the Hindoo word for queen. Our word for death is the same as the French word. Our language, however, does not solve the problem. Often friends say to me, "Where do you come from?" I reply, "It doesn't bother me very much where we come from, but I want to know where we are going."

Many have asked if the word "Gipsy" is related to "Egyptian." If we came out of Egypt we came out with the children of Israel, and if we did come out as they did, we were a part of the House of Israel. But it is absolutely impossible to prove or disprove it.

I am often asked too, "What about George Borrow?" I reply, "George Borrow is not an authority on my people. Many of his characters are not Gipsies, but he did not know that. I do." The best account in the English tongue about Gipsies is that by my friend the late Mr. Theodore Watts Dunton. When his novel entitled "Aylwin," was published, I read it through carefully, and I said, "Here at last is a book about my people which has the stamp of truth." It struck me as being obviously a sketch of a living person. I spoke of the book in my lectures, and declared that Mr. Watts Dunton was almost the only Englishman who had done gipsy women justice.

Hearing that I spoke in high praise of the book, the author sent me an autographed copy, and invited me to dine with him. I told him his picture of a gipsy girl looked like a pen and ink sketch from life. "That is just what it is," he said, "my college chum fell in love with and married a gipsy girl, and so you see I got my information at first hand."

There are I believe, about 25,000 Gipsies in Great Britain, and probably as many more in the United States. As I said at the Queen's Hall meeting of the Bible Society recently, I wonder sometimes why nothing was done to include the English Gipsy in the operations of this great and God-blessed organisation.

Gipsies are found in all lands. I found a cousin in a camp near New York some years ago. My people roam because nobody wants them. What else can they do? They are suspected and misunderstood everywhere. The nomadic instinct, of course, is in their blood, as it is in the blood of the Arab people, to whom they are related.

When I publicly claim that my people are related to the Jews, and might conceivably be one of the Lost Tribes, some hearer is sure to smile, but I am serious. I will give three reasons for my belief.

First, there is a striking facial resemblance between the two people; second, up to comparatively recent times Gipsies did not have any legal form or even signed contract in marrying. It was thus Jacob took Rachel to his tent. If my British or my American friends have anything condemnatory to say about that, I may gently remind them that not a few of their fellow country-men still need carefully compiled laws, and disgrace their countries by widespread divorce; third, Gipsies, although

they have no Bibles, are almost universally given Bible names.

The American gipsy tent differs from those in England. There it is made out of sheeting or canvas just like a common tent. In England the sides and roof are ribbed with sticks and the whole is covered with woollen blankets which are warm and durable. It is hard to get a Gipsy to live in a house. My brother Ezekiel made his home in Cambridge. In the summer he lived in a cottage; in the winter I found he had moved into a tent. I said to him, "Ezekiel, why did you move?" "Oh," he said, "a house is so cold in the winter time!"

When my father was about to marry again, I advised him to buy a house, as the lady of his choice was not accustomed to a tent. My father retorted, "What! put my hard earned money into dirt!" He did eventually buy three plots of land, in company with his brothers, but when they built their cottages they were not satisfied until they had put them on wheels!

Speaking generally, gipsy men manufacture various articles, and the women and children sell them. The men instruct the women and children concerning the corner or locality where they can find the wagon at night. If the police make them move on, grass is trailed loosely along to lead the way to the new camping ground.

Cheap prices, however, have largely driven the Gipsies out of the manufacturing business. The women tell fortunes. They know they are lying. The shame is that people of civilised nations, including members of Christian churches, should pay them to lie. The very fact helps to prevent them becoming Christians. They know no other way of earning a livelihood, and they fear starvation if they give it up.

Sometimes when I am talking about the respect which young Gipsies are taught to show to their elders I tell of an amusing incident. On one occasion when I was at home my father was in his garden talking to an old friend. Their united ages came to 180 years. After a while I ventured to put in a word. "Hush, boy!" said my father reprovingly, "*Can't you see I'm talking to a man?*" And I was a grandfather!

By the way, for a long time I did not know the exact date of my birth. Gipsies had no documentary evidence of such things. At last I thought of an old gipsy auntie, and I said "I'll go and ask Aunt Susan." So I hunted her up, and when I found her I said, "Aunt Susan, do you know how old I am?" She said, "Why, yes, my dear, I know exactly. You are three months younger than my Naomi!" "How do you know?" I asked. She said, "My dear, I was with your mother when you were born, and these arms first held you, and my Naomi was a baby three months old." I asked if I was christened. "Yes," she said, "your mother and I went to a vicarage in Essex, and the clergyman christened you." I asked her when she went back there to look up the records and let me know, and soon I discovered that I was one year younger than I had thought I was.

Then I went to my father, and I said, "Daddy, I have the exact year and month and day of my birth. Now, was it morning or night?" He said, "I don't know." I said, "You are my father, and if I can't put my finger on the exact hour someone is sure to say I was not born at all." He looked at me with a twinkle in his eye and replied, "Rodney, you *were* born." I said, "I suppose so." "Well," he said, "be content, and let that do!"

When the Gipsies settle down they nearly always be-

come traders. They rarely stop roaming unless they are converted. They may start in a small way, but they generally succeed. That may be another indication that they are related to the Jews. My brother-in-law, Mr. Ball, who was converted in one of my earlier meetings, settled in this way at Hanley, and became one of the best known dealers in house furnishings in all the Potteries. He is the only Gipsy who has ever been elected to the City Council, and he has been returned without defeat for many years. He is also a magistrate.

I may mention here that I have two sisters and a brother living. My eldest sister, Mrs. Ball, the wife of Councillor Ball, lives in Manchester. My second sister, Mrs. Evans (Matilda, the baby of our family), lives at Liverpool, and has a son who is in the Wesleyan Methodist ministry. My brother Ezekiel lives at Cambridge, and frequently conducts evangelistic missions. Many of my relatives still live in true gipsy style, and when I visit an encampment I am not surprised if I find a Smith who has at least some distant connection with the family.

These nomadic people are not paupers. They usually have money hidden somewhere among their effects. They do not trust the banks. They never desert the old folks or those who are poverty-stricken. Gipsies are not found in the Poor Law Institution. They do not become tramps.

The Romany people have no religion of their own. They believe in God, though they do not know much about Him. They rigidly observe Sunday as a day of rest. Every possible bit of work is avoided.

I have always tried to tell the truth about my own people. There is, of course, still a good deal of drinking and bad language among the Gipsies. They are not, however, generally addicted to gambling. Impurity is almost

unknown among them. They still "find" things, but take no more than their immediate needs demand. They will turn horses into someone's pasture late at night and take them out early in the morning. Wood and brush are freely picked up to use in making clothes pegs and baskets.

Gipsies seldom quarrel. They associate little with others, and must get along amicably with each other. A disagreement is usually settled by talking it through. If it comes to a fight, the men use their fists; no other weapons are required. They very rarely go to law.

Gipsy womanhood is protected. I have never known a gipsy girl to go astray. The mother teaches the daughter from girlhood to look out for herself. The father puts clearly before the boys the duty of protecting their sisters. The young people do not court in an isolated place. They are usually sweethearts from childhood. There are no gipsy divorces or family break-ups. The men marry usually at twenty-three, and girls at twenty, and the young couple start the new life by buying a good team and wagon. The men turn their earnings over to the father until they marry. The parents are respected. Even big boys and girls are chastised. The children do not dare to "answer back." Relatives seldom intermarry. Cousins sometimes wed, as there is no law against it. Of course, all the talk about gipsies stealing children is so much nonsense. Gipsies do not need other people's children; they have quite enough of their own. An uncle of mine had twenty-four, and a grand-uncle had thirty-one. It is a bogey set up by nurse maids to frighten little innocents who, I am afraid, often suffer ill effects all their lives from such stupid inventions.

The gipsy folk are healthy. My grand-uncle lived to

be 101 years of age. My father died at the age of ninety—his hair not even then turned grey. The outdoor life keeps Gipsies rugged, and they have few sicknesses. Most ailments are treated by herb remedies prepared by the old mothers, but doctors are called in if needed. Consumption among the Gipsies is practically unknown. Contagious diseases are rare for the people are very clean in their habits.

Gipsies eat two meals a day. Breakfast comes at half past seven and supper at five. They carry no supplies. Provisions are generally secured as they are needed. They usually "find" enough potatoes for a meal in a neighbouring field. They do not take more than they want. Why should they? There will be another field further on. Most of their food is fried or boiled. Meat and potatoes are the usual diet and boiled pudding is a very popular dish.

Should there be a death in a gipsy encampment, the deceased is buried in the nearest cemetery, and a clergyman is notified. The Gipsies believe strongly in immortality. They look forward to a Heaven for the good, and a hell for the bad. They are not Christians simply because no missionary has gone to them.

This reminds me of a tragic story. When my father was a young man, there was a band of Gipsies, a band of my own people, in the county of Kent, England, and they were gathering hops for a large section of the country. They had finished one field of hops on one side of the river Medway, and the farmer wanted them to gather for him a field on the other side. He proposed to take them from one field to the other in his big farm wagon, and the driver started his horses.

It was a picturesque sight. The women were bedecked

as only gipsy women can deck themselves, some of them singing snatches of song, others laughing and joking, and their merry songs and merry peals of laughter made music for the listeners in the fields as they passed. The wagon turned a bend in the road, and there was a bridge over which they hoped to go. The river was in flood and the water was over the roadway of the bridge, a wooden structure, and when the women saw that the water was flowing over the bed of the bridge, some of them screamed. Before the driver could gather up the reins the leading horse made a plunge forward, the side of the wagon crashed into the old wooden structure of the bridge and they were all thrown into that swift-flowing current.

A companion of my father, a brave young gipsy boy, seized the straps of the leading horse, and pulled him further down the stream's bank and straining his eyes to see one dearer to him than any other in God's world, his mother. He saw her, and being a splendid swimmer, jumped in to save her and caught hold of her. She, mother-like, seized her boy and thought she had to save him, and she clutched and pinioned him. He knew he could not save her unless he broke loose from her. He was a strong man and he just wrenched her from him and swam round her and caught hold of her again. She grabbed him. Three times he threw his mother from him, and three times he wrestled with her to save her, and three times he had to let her go. The last time she got entangled with some rubbish and sank.

When the funeral came there were thirty-nine Gipsies buried together. They dug a big trench in that little churchyard and put the coffins in. People had gathered from all around the countryside to show their sympathy with the bereaved. My father's friend, the brave young

man, forgot the clergyman who was reading the service; forgot the crowd. He thought only of his mother, and he went down in that trench and laid his head on the coffin, and as he lay there he cried out in the agony of his soul: "O mother! mother! mother! I did all a man could do: I tried to save you, but you would not let me; you would not let me; you would not let me." There is an application to this painful story. I will not stay to labour it.

To return to the characteristics of my people.

Everybody knows that Gipsies like display. They love to wear gay trimmings on their coats. Large pearl buttons adorn their garments. I have known them to wear silver shillings, brightly polished, as clothing fasteners; gaily coloured silk handkerchiefs for neckwear are indispensable. The last time I wore a coloured neckerchief, I was dressed in strange garments for the purpose of descending a coal mine, and the manager laughingly remarked, "Now you look more like a Gipsy than ever." I looked more like a sweep an hour later.

I have to admit that Gipsies are naturally vain. When I began to preach, I bought a big trunk, carefully roped it, and carried it along with me empty just for the sake of appearance. Perhaps in forty-five years I have had to sacrifice something in the way of a personal liking for colour. My garments have been respectably sombre; I have worn no jewellery for many years. The gayest thing about my personal appearance is an occasional button-hole which I am induced to wear at a farewell meeting, and I confess, if it be only a few violets or a lily of the valley the wearing of it gives me pleasure.

The first bit of jewellery I ever had was a gold-headed scarf-pin. Once when our tent was pitched three miles

from Norton churchyard, my sister Tilly and I wandered off to find our mother's grave. When we were coming away I said to Tilly, "I wonder whether we can do anything more for mother?" I suddenly remembered I had this scarf-pin. It was the only valuable thing I ever had as a child. I ran back to the grave and stuck the scarf-pin into the ground as far as ever I could. "There Tilly," I said, "I've given my gold pin to mother!"

When I left the gipsy tent to become an evangelist I wore a brown velvet suit and a yellow silk handkerchief. I said, "If I am to be a preacher I shall have to dress like one. I cannot go dressed like this in this velvet jacket with white pearl buttons." I had seen preachers wearing frock coats, so I took a bit of money that I had saved and I went to a shop. I had only turned my seventeenth birthday. I bought a suit and I paid for it. The man wrapped it up and pushed it across the counter, and I looked at him and I said, "Send it!"

I wanted some more things I saw in the window, some linen, but I didn't know how to say the words. I wanted some collars and scarfs and two girls came to serve me, and then I did not know what I wanted. They saw I was in a fix and in the twinkling of an eye one girl said, "What do you want?" And I said, "I want some shirts." And she said, "What size?" I said, "Give me a bit of string, and I will measure myself."

The great day came and I was dressed up in this suit. My father had gone preaching, and there was no mother. I stepped out for a new world. I could see what was ahead of me. I was a pretty brave boy. I confess that, but I do not think I could have passed through what I have gone through if it had not been for the Lord. It was not easy. I had all sorts of discouragements, all

kinds of jealousies, all kinds of oppositions, but one thing kept me going. God gave me the people, and God gave me souls.

Gipsies love music. In a Pittsburg hotel a wonderful Hungarian orchestra played. I spoke to the leader in our own language and found that the players were real Gipsies. They told me that in Hungary our people lived in houses and were for the most part educated. Among the unlettered, fathers teach their sons to play the violin by ear, and so pass on the popular Hungarian tunes. Brass instruments, by the way, are not liked by Gipsies. They are too sharp and harsh. I shall never forget hearing my father play his beloved fiddle. When he drew his bow over the strings you could almost hear the rain fall, and hear the birds singing, and hear the rustling of the trees in the breeze.

But it was not all so poetic. At one time my father, before his conversion, used to go into the public houses with his fiddle and play for pence. I was proud to accompany him—a wild-eyed sharp youngster who listened eagerly to all the talk in the inn parlour, and sometimes performed a little dance to the music. My father used to go round with the hat. If, as sometimes did happen, he was given more drink than usual, I used to seize the opportunity and take up a collection on my own. Some of my friends say that was one indication that I was fated to be a preacher! My father's fiddle, however, made no music after my mother's death. He had promised her that he would turn over a new leaf. He looked upon his fiddle as a temptation. When he was converted he sold his horses, and he sold the fiddle: he never played again till he felt he was master of the situation.

I have a very keen ear for music. I can play a piece on a piano—in a fashion—or sing it, fairly accurately I am told, after hearing it twice. Yet I cannot read a note of music. I have a nephew extraordinarily gifted in this way. He can play almost any piece of music after hearing it once.

People frequently come to me and ask me who gave me lessons in elocution. I never had a music lesson or an elocution lesson in my life.

When I went to my first evangelistic meeting, under the watchful eye of dear old General Booth, he suddenly announced that I would speak. I sang the chorus of a song to keep up my composure. Someone on the platform called out breezily, "Keep your heart up, young man!" "Well," I said, "it's in my mouth. How much higher can I get it?" This pleased the crowd, and I was able to say something, after which the General offered me service in his Christian Mission.

I was the first evangelist in this country to sing "Throw out the life line," which Sankey had given me on my first visit to America. I was also the first to sing "When the roll is called up yonder." Mention of that familiar song reminds me of a very tragic happening. One day at Hanley a man was walking along the street in which I had lived, singing "When the roll is called up yonder I'll be there," when suddenly the road opened, and he fell down an old pit shaft. There had been no visible sign of the danger. It was found quite impossible to recover the poor fellow's body. The other day when I was at Hanley I was shown his photograph and several people said they well remembered attending a funeral service at the edge of this unusual grave, wreaths being dropped down the deep pit.

Another song I introduced in this country was "Saved by Grace." I had a great deal to do with the popularising of "Count your blessings," which for a good many years was an indispensable feature of all my meetings. I first heard this sung by a group of crippled and invalid children at a home which I was visiting and it made such an impression upon me that I knew it might be made a means of blessing to thousands. Yet another song which I popularised—"Pass It On,"—should be mentioned. Once I sang it at a social function, and I noticed that my friend D. Henry Burton was in tears. "Gipsy," he said, "I little knew when I wrote those words that I was writing a little sermon for you." I had not known until then that he was the author of the little poem which has reached the hearts of people all over the world.

Thomas Champness once said to me, "Always sing before you preach." "Why?" I asked. "Because," he said, "the song is the gimlet that makes the hole for the nail to go in. Sometimes if you didn't sing you might only split the board." There is much truth in that. I have often known a song to do what a sermon would not do. People never quarrel with a song if they are at all musical. The message of the gospel song is often in their hearts before they realise it.

Some time ago I wrote the words of a Romany love song which I thought might be set to music. I submitted it to a well-known composer, but after keeping the manuscript for many days he replied that it did not appeal to him. When I was in America I suddenly remembered the song, and a melody came into my head which I thought would suit it. I sang it first to myself, then I asked my pianist if he liked it. He at once offered to arrange the harmony for me. He sat down at the piano,

I sang the melody to him, and in a few minutes we had it written down. Not long afterwards it was published, and, I believe, has already sold widely.

When I write of Gipsies and song I think at once with unutterable pathos of my dear mother. As a little girl she had overheard Sunday-school children singing, "I have a Father in the Promised Land." She never knew about God, but she trusted in the message of this simple song, and passed peacefully away with it on her lips.

My evangelistic career began with a song, I pray that it may end with one.

## CHAPTER IV

PREACHERS I HAVE MET.—DR. MACLAREN, THE  
REV. S. F. COLLIER, DR. PARKER, PETER  
MC KENZIE, THOMAS CHAMPNESS, DR. BERRY,  
H. W. BEECHER, DR. JOWETT

I HAVE often longed to write a book entitled, "Preachers I Have Met." All over the world in these forty years I have come into contact with distinguished ministers of all denominations. It would be impossible to mention all their names, but there are some in particular for whose influence I shall never cease to be grateful.

I think, for example, of the late Dr. Alexander Mac-laren, from whom I received an inspiration that can never be put into words. My breath was almost taken away when at Manchester, at the end of 1894, Dr. Mac-laren told me he wanted me to conduct a mission in Union Chapel, where there had never been such an event. For a long time the tempter kept saying "You can never stand in that pulpit." He kept on saying it, even when the day came and I nervously climbed the pulpit stairs. But there was no withstanding Dr. Maclaren. I knew him, trusted him, loved him. He had won my heart years before. So though I felt a tremendous responsibility in going with my own methods to that cultured congregation who sat under this prince of preachers, I placed myself in God's hands, and in no way departed from my usual procedure. The mission was a glorious triumph.

Altogether 600 people professed conversion. It was one of the most remarkable missions of my life, and I have always felt that such a campaign in Dr. Maclaren's church set a seal upon my work as an evangelist.

Among my treasures is a letter in which Dr. Maclaren signalled his best wishes and prayers on my departure for my mission in South Africa. When I had the joy of his friendship I used to go into his study as if it were my own. Whenever I went to hear him preach he felt it very much if I did not sit in his pew, or if I left without seeing him. Somehow he seemed to feel he had a special oversight in regard to my career, and he always expected me, if I went to the chapel, to go into the vestry. Indeed, I was privileged to go into that room after a service while he had his customary cup of milk and two biscuits. At that time the door would be locked, but when I gave a prearranged signal, three little taps with my finger nail, he would admit me.

I think Dr. Maclaren was the most retiring man I ever met in my life. Like Dr. Parker, he shrank from social functions, and was reserved away from the pulpit; but once he got into the pulpit, his whole being seemed to radiate power and the grand old man was the prince of assemblies. More than once, after some mighty effort that swayed a great audience he would say plaintively, "Gipsy, I think I must never preach again. You know I can't really preach at all!"

Once I said to him, "Doctor, do you ever preach about the things you are not sure of?"

"Oh, no," he replied, "there is so much that I am sure of, when I preach I talk about the things that I *know*." And that was the secret of his mighty ministry.

In the Anglican Church I have had many friends.

Among them I have been proud to number the Bishop of London, Dr. Winnington Ingram, that cheerful, brotherly spirit whose very presence is a tonic. He was good enough to write a foreword to a little story of experiences in the war which I published, and in this he said, "I like this breezy little book of Gipsy Smith's; it is full not only of the love of Jesus but love of 'our boys.' They are splendid. Gipsy Smith and I made friends together, speaking for them at the London Opera House on the great day of Intercession and Thanksgiving which we had for them when the King himself called us all together."

On two occasions I have preached at that beautiful little sanctuary, the Chapel Royal in the Savoy. The Chaplain, the Rev. Hugh B. Chapman, is a real evangelist, and can talk in his own fresh, stimulating, colloquial way to men and women of any class—the aristocrat, the theatrical star, the man in the street, the jaded society woman, the "down-and-outer." Once I heard him pray: "Lord, save the blooming lot!" That may sound very shocking, but Mr. Chapman's congregation would not be at all shocked. They understood him—and love him. He is one of those delightfully natural men who are just themselves, in the pulpit and out of it.

Now, what can I say of my beloved friend, the late Samuel F. Collier, of Manchester? He was so poised, so steady, so sane that I often thought of him as the greatest Methodist since John Wesley. It is just forty years since I came into contact with his fascinating personality. Mr. Collier once wrote: "It was in the year 1883 that I first saw Gipsy Smith wandering down Anlaby Road, Hull. I came across Wilberforce Hall; entering, I was

at once attracted by the remarkable voice and earnest manner of the speaker. A dark young man was delivering an impassioned appeal which stirred the audience to its very depths. On enquiry I found it was Gipsy Smith of Hanley. I did not come into personal contact with the Gipsy until about three years later. Then began a friendship which has been continued with increasing warmth and strength to this day. We have been on the closest terms of intimacy and probably no two men have occupied the same platform together more frequently."

Mr. Collier, with whom in the early days of our friendship I had so often conducted services, became convinced that I ought to leave my settled pastorate at Hanley and engage in evangelistic work over a wider area. He always said he was thankful that he was largely the means of leading me out into the work I was able to accomplish in various parts of the world. I joined the staff of the Manchester Mission as special evangelist in 1889, and for nearly a quarter of a century was associated with the indefatigable Superintendent in his amazing work.

Mr. Collier did more than any other man in England for the evangelisation of city life. He did more than any man I know of in the world for the down-and-out. He went to Manchester as a young man, and his first congregation numbered 42. The time came when he and his colleagues preached to 10,000 people in that same great evangelistic centre. There had grown a Christian and a social work, the like of which I have never known in connection with one church.

Shortly after the opening of the Manchester Central Hall, the late General Booth asked permission to hold a meeting there. This being granted, he delivered an address in the course of which he is said to have declared

that before long that hall would be handed over to him to work, as the Wesleyans would never be able to carry it on. The General reckoned, however, without Mr. Collier, and in later life he mournfully confessed that the Army could not expect to secure great successes in Manchester on account of the wide-spreading work of the Manchester Mission.

I do not know that Collier was looked upon as a great preacher, yet for thirty years he had the largest Sunday night congregation you would find in Methodism. The people were drawn by the sheer brotherliness of his nature, his kindliness of heart, his loyalty to the one purpose of his life. He was always proclaiming a message of hope for "the bottom dog." He believed if the Church was not reaching the very lowest she was failing in her mission. I do not know that I have seen any human ministry which better epitomised the words of Jesus, "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." He always urged that the Church should not only preach to the down-and-outer, but should organise for him, work for him, play the part of the good Samaritan to him, clothe him, feed him, stand by him and encourage him as he put his foot on the first rung of the ladder; and then give him something to do for somebody else.

When I think of his glorious rescue and preventive work I am reminded of one of the most touching stories I ever heard. One morning Mr. Collier went from his home to the mission between eight and nine o'clock. He passed through the swing doors—those swing doors which were always open, always well oiled—and entered the corridor. There was partial darkness, for it was one of those foggy days to which Manchester is accustomed. When he got along a little way he heard the plaintive voice

of a woman, and he turned, and there stood one of the fallen women from one of the worst houses in the city. She said, "Mr. Collier, you have done your best to save me. I am very grateful, but there is no hope for the likes of me. I am too far gone. I am too old in it. I know all the tricks of the game, but you see this little lassie? She is only seventeen years old. She is straight and pure, and she has no friend, and she is in this city alone, and last night she drifted into the hell where I am, and Mr. Collier, do you know what would have happened by morning if somebody hadn't mothered her? I thought of what I was once and the memory of it would not let me stand by and see her sacrificed, and so I gave up my living for the night and I took her away and took care of her, and I have brought her to you, and, for God's sake, save the girl from becoming what I am!"

Imagine how that appealed to the big-souled leader of the Mission! That poor creature with all her sin and shame was doing the work of the Son of God. I wonder how much *we* have given up in order to save a soul? One afternoon's social function? One evening's entertainment?

Mr. Collier often told me a story which deeply impressed me. When he left college he was sent into the Kent district to work for a year under the chairman of the district as district missionary. He was preaching one night at a chapel in one of the coast towns, and had pronounced the benediction, when to his amazement the congregation sat still, not one leaving his seat. "As a young and inexperienced minister," said Mr. Collier, "I did not know what to do next. I dared not leave the pulpit until the congregation moved. During these moments of suspense a widow lady climbed the pulpit steps and whispered,

‘Mr. Collier, do you think you have honoured the Holy Spirit to-night?’ Then I remembered that we had not sung one hymn to the Holy Spirit; we had not prayed that He might come; I had made no reference in my sermon to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. I at once asked the people to forgive me. I went on my knees and asked God to forgive me. Then, without any invitation, we saw penitents crowding to the communion-rail, and each vestry was crowded with those who were seeking the Lord. It made an impression upon me which never faded.”

When, in September, 1897, the National Free Church Council wanted to go in for a big evangelistic movement, and invited me to become their first general missionary or evangelist, I left the Manchester Mission with much regret. I had rejoiced exceedingly to belong to a church with such a pastor, a church where there was a perpetual revival, and, to my own knowledge, was not a week in all the years without a conversion.

Since Mr. Collier’s death, things are never the same, for my beloved chief was my greatest friend in the world. A working man once said to me, “Hear Collier preach? Of course! How *can* I keep away when he shakes hands with me every week?” Samuel Collier was an amazing worker, and he knew how to get other people to work. His mother once said, “Why, when he was a lad, and I sent him on an errand, he’d have four other lads to carry the basket.” I think I must have been one of those boys!

Shortly before he died I had a conversation with him in which he mentioned his colleague, the Rev. Herbert Cooper—a little man with a big heart, who was destined to become his successor as the Chief in this amazing mission. “I wish, Gipsy,” said Mr. Collier, “that Cooper was

a few inches taller." "Wait a minute, Sam," I said, "You must remember Cooper's brains are not in his legs." Subsequent events proved that no man could have been better fitted than Mr. Cooper to follow Mr. Collier. It was not an easy thing to do, but Mr. Cooper tackled the responsibility with rare courage and soon won golden opinions by his bold leadership.

One of the great Methodists whose kindness I can never forget was Charles Garrett of Liverpool. Just one illustration of his generosity and thoroughness: He heard that I was going to America as a young and inexperienced preacher. "I know you will have a good time," he wrote, "but I want to be able to write to my American friends, and to tell them I have a first-hand knowledge of your capabilities. So please come and spend a week with me at Liverpool, and let me sit under you in my church; then I can have the joy of giving my judgment." I never forgot this very kindly and fatherly act on the part of an honoured servant of God whose work on earth was nearly over.

I do not know that I can recall any three men who set my mind working faster than did Dr. Parker, Dr. W. L. Watkinson and old Matthew Henry. Stories of Dr. Parker are legion. I need only say my first impression of him is indelibly engraved on my memory. When I was quite a youngster, Mr. Collier had occasion to go and see the lion of the City Temple, and invited me to go with him. Mr. Collier wanted to secure Dr. Parker for some meeting at Manchester, but when we got in the study he had hardly a chance to make his request. When he saw me the doctor cried, "Who's this?" Mr. Collier introduced me. "Oh," said the doctor, "a live Gipsy, eh?" At once he took me on his knee and ordered me to tell

him all about my gipsy life. He was so engrossed in the story of my leaving the gipsy tent that he forgot all about Collier.

At last he said, "Now my boy, have you written all this down?" I said, "No, sir." "Well," he said, "you see that door? Go through there into the other room, and sit down and begin to write it this very minute!" That was hardly possible, but it may be imagined how the great man encouraged me, and how I determined that one day the story should be told to the world. The day came when I preached for Dr. Parker at the City Temple, where I had often sat spellbound when he occupied that famous pulpit.

Once Dr. Parker preached the official sermon for the Baptist Union when that body was meeting in Leeds. Dr. Maclaren and other great preachers sat by him. Parker felt he was having a bad time. When the service was over he stalked up and down the vestry saying to Maclaren, "I couldn't preach, I couldn't preach." The dear old doctor from Manchester, who happened to be wearing a new pair of striped trousers, murmured, "Why couldn't you?" "Well," thundered Parker, pointing at the offending nether garments, "how *could* a man preach, with those ungodly breeches by the side of him?"

I remember once, when Dr. Parker was away from the City Temple, some preacher from America, who was a strong Calvinist, occupied the famous pulpit. At the Thursday service, at which I was present, Parker cried, "They tell me somebody has been preaching in this pulpit in my absence that my God has elected one half of the world to be saved, and the other half to be damned. If that be true—well, let me fumigate this pulpit."

On another Thursday, which I shall always remember, Parker looked round at the names inscribed above the

galleries of the City Temple—Wesley, Whitefield and the rest—and exclaimed dramatically, “Gone, all gone!” Then he added a few more names, contemporaries of his own, concluding with, “Spurgeon—gone!” Then he drew himself up as if shivering, and in low tones said, “It is becoming chilly, and I feel lonesome.” We who sat listening to him felt chilled to the bone.

There was a very cold winter in London, when the water pipes of the houses were frozen, and people went out with cans and jugs to get water from the main. Parker preached one Thursday morning from the text, “Canst thou change the order of the seasons?” “I have given up taking comic papers,” he said. “I get enough fun out of seeing men of science climbing up their little ladders about ten feet, and falling down again. A few of these men of science met together the other day in conference to see what they could do to change the order of the seasons. While they were busy changing the order, God came down with a key of ice, and locked them all in. They sit shivering over the fire; presently in spite of all their wisdom they will be called upon to pay a water rate for water which they never had!”

I was present at the City Temple when Dr. Parker preached his last sermon, though of course, at the time none of us believed it was the last time he would stand there. I asked in the vestry if I might have the pencilled notes of his sermon. The framed scrap of paper now hangs in my study.

I remember with gratitude that virile personality, Hugh Price Hughes, who was such an outstanding example of cultured evangelism. I often tell at young people's meetings this little story: At table one day he said he gave his heart to Jesus when he was thirteen. “Why, daddy,”

said his little girl, "I am only five and I did it ever so long ago!"

I heard him tell this story with great joy in his face.

Stories innumerable have been told and are still being told, about dear old Peter McKenzie, whose intimate friendship I enjoyed. He was a veritable sunbeam in the lives of thousands. I treasure a characteristic letter from him. Once when he heard of the results of one of my campaigns he cried, "Glory be to God! I'll send you a goose at Christmas." Subsequently he wrote that he had no time to purchase a goose. He sent me ten shillings and a photo of himself. "When you receive that," he wrote, "you will have goose enough."

Once Peter came to preach and lecture at Hanley. He was entertained by an old friend who asked him if there was anybody he would like to meet at dinner. He replied, "Yes, I want the Gipsy." At dinner we were having duck and green peas. The hostess said, "Now, Mr. McKenzie, will you have ginger ale, ginger beer, lemonade, tea, or coffee?" Peter looked up with a chuckle and said, "*Oh, I think I'll let the duck swim in water!*"

I was told a beautiful story about him. When he went home to die—though Methodism, and even his own people at Dewsbury did not realize it—my friend Mr. Martin, the superintendent of the circuit, went to see him. "Well, Mr. McKenzie," he said, "I have come to bring you the love of your people and to say we are all praying that you may speedily recover." "Oh," said Peter, "tell 'em I'm in the dry dock, undergoing repairs." Soon afterwards there came a change for the worse, and we knew there was no hope. Mr. Martin went to see him again, and said, "Mr. McKenzie, we are broken hearted, we are stricken dumb." The famous preacher looked up with

the familiar twinkle in his eye, and said, "Come, you must cheer up, my friend. Father's going to send down an angel before long now, and let poor old Peter out of prison."

A friendship I greatly prized was that of the Rev. Thomas Champness. I first met him in Newcastle when I was twenty-one. I never forgot one thing he said as we talked together. The conversation turned upon difficult places. "My boy," said Mr. Champness, "always remember that *if God has a big contract on hand, Faith gets the job!*"

A few months before Mr. Champness died, he told me a story which I shall always remember. A widow (whose name he gave) was left with six boys. She was a poor woman, and took in washing for a living. By doing a day's additional work here and there she managed to keep her boys decently clad, respectable, and at school. The eldest boy, Jack, went to a distant city to work. He never wrote to his mother. She pined for a letter from her first-born. Her face wasted, and her brow furrowed.

The months passed. One day Jack received a message that his mother was dying, and that if he wished to see her alive, he must hasten home. Conscience-stricken, he went, and on his arrival in the old homestead, in his rough, thoughtless way he rushed into the chamber where his mother lay. He did not know what to say; finally he blurted out: "Mother, we shall miss you terribly. You have always been a good mother to us." She replied, "My boy, why, oh why did you not say it before? If you had said it but once I might have lived a little longer. You never once told me that, all these years. Now it is too late—too late!" And she died. When

Mr. Champness told a story like that, he made it go right home.

When I try and acknowledge my debt to great preachers, I must not omit Dr. Dale, of Birmingham. He was one of the mighty giants of Christianity. He was the predecessor of Dr. Jowett and he built up a mighty church in Birmingham. More than once I heard Dr. Jowett say that when he went to Birmingham he entered into a mighty heritage. There was a great, busy church, with all kinds of things going on every night in the week, and every room illuminated and hundreds of young people going in and out. On one night in the week, however, every room was in darkness save one. Why? The church was at prayer. That was prayer meeting night. The church was on its knees, and there was absolutely nothing else going on. The young people would not dream of asking for a room for any social function at that hour.

That reminds me of a story of C. H. Spurgeon. A little delegation of Americans went over to listen to him preach once in his great Tabernacle. They enjoyed his preaching, and they wanted to see him and shake hands with him after the sermon. They were struck with the coldness of the Tabernacle. It was not heated until the people got in there. One of the delegation remarked that the Tabernacle was cold and asked Mr. Spurgeon, "Have you no heating apparatus?" "Oh yes, if you will come to-night at a certain time I will show it to you," said the great preacher. When they went he took them into a little room where there was a group of young men on their knees praying for their pastor, and he said, "*That is where the power is generated in this church. That is the dynamo.*"

I am reminded, too, of the late Dr. Charles Berry of Wolverhampton. Once when I conducted a mission at Wolverhampton in 1896 Dr. Berry gave up every engagement except one; a great meeting in London on behalf of the Armenians. When the Lord Mayor invited him to dinner at that time he replied, "I can't come. The most important thing under the sun just now to me is the mission in Wolverhampton, and what would the people think of Dr. Berry if he was feeding at your table while sinners are being converted?" Dr. Berry was the life and soul of the campaign. No man ever stood by me more sympathetically. Once I said to him, "How I wish I could sit down and do nothing but study for a whole year!" "Yes," he retorted, "and then you would be absolutely spoiled! Just go on with your work and do as much reading as you can find time for." I remember that in that mission 140 of the converts decided to become associated with Dr. Berry's church. He summoned a church meeting, and choosing an equal number of his own members, put a young convert in charge of each. The member was told he was expected to visit the new convert, and to report to the minister every week for two, three or four months. Every one of the 140 became a member of the Church.

Here is a beautiful little story which Dr. Berry told to Dr. Jowett and myself once. When he was a young preacher and went to Bolton, he said, he was becoming practically an iconoclast, with leanings towards Unitarianism. Late one night he was in his study, when the door bell rang, and he found a Lancashire girl with a shawl over her head. She said, "You're a minister. I want you to come and get my mother in." Dr. Berry thought she meant that her mother was in a drunken

state, and said, "Oh, you must get a policeman." She said, "Mother's dying, and she's no saved. You are to come and get her into Heaven."

After some little hesitation, Dr. Berry went through the streets with her for a mile, at one o'clock in the morning. He found the mother in a house of shame. Below, people were singing and drinking; upstairs the woman was dying. He talked to her as well as he could, but she tossed like a ship at sea and said, "Eh, mister, that's no good for the likes of me. I'm a poor sinner, and I need help. Can't you tell me something of somebody who is able to save me?"

Dr. Berry, when telling the story, turned to Dr. Jowett and said, "Jowett, I was like a drowning man clutching at a straw. I jumped back to everything my mother taught me at her knee, and I began to tell this poor dying sinner of Christ's love on the Cross."

"Eh," she said, "*now* you are getting at it!" "Well, I got her in, and that night I got myself in as well. My preaching has been another preaching ever since."

Dr. Berry was the first man to receive a call to succeed Henry Ward Beecher at Brooklyn. I believe Beecher, before he died, brought the name of Dr. Berry before his church, suggesting him as a possible successor. When he received the call Dr. Berry made a remark which was characteristically wise and witty. "You know, Gipsy," he said, "anybody may jump into Beecher's shoes, but it isn't everybody who can wear Beecher's hat." That reminds me that on another occasion, when Dr. Berry received the call to Wolverhampton, he received an invitation at the same time to the famous old Congregational Church at Halifax, which had a distinguished minister. "You know, Gipsy," he said confidentially, "if

I go to Halifax I shall be known as So and So's successor, but if I go to Wolverhampton I am likely to be known as So and So's predecessor, and after all, that is bound to weigh with me a bit."

When Henry Ward Beecher was visiting this country he visited Hanley and lectured in the Imperial Circus upon "The Reign of the Common People." Somebody told him I preached in the building, and that on Sunday nights our congregation filled it. "Oh," he said, "I can't leave Hanley without seeing this young preacher." I was sent for and introduced to him. I was little more than a youth at that time. The great man put his hand on my shoulder and said, "They tell me you preach in this place!" "Well, sir," I said, "I try to." "Oh," he said, "and what do you preach? What message have you for the people?" "I only know one, sir," I said, "and that is Jesus Christ, crucified, and risen." "And people crowd in here to hear that message?" he asked. I said, "They do, sir." "H'm," he said, "I shall have to hear more about you. You know, I am always looking out for young preachers, and it is my special joy to encourage them."

Some months afterward, when I was preaching in Exeter he was passing through, and happening to notice my name he came out of his way to see me. In the most fatherly way he gave me some good advice as to my studies and as to sermon-making. He told me when I went to America I was to be sure and preach for him at Plymouth Church, but when I did visit that country the great preacher had passed to his reward.

Dr. J. H. Jowett has long been one of my dearest friends. When he was President of the National Free Church Council I had the privilege of being associated

with him in great meetings in all parts of the country. For many years he has expressed the deepest sympathy with my work, and there is no one whose support I have prized more highly than that of this prince of preachers. When I went to America in 1921 Dr. Jowett wrote: "You are so beloved of the American people and your presence is always so welcome that I feel you are an ambassador of goodwill and friendship among the nations. Wherever you go your presence and your work will be a cementing ministry and that is why I glory in the wide range of your labours." Dr. Jowett's ministry in New York was so far-reaching that no words could convey an adequate idea of the work he did there. I shall never forget one service at the Fifth Avenue Church when, in a tremendous sermon, he flung out one telling sentence of six words: "The Kaiser's God is my devil!" At that critical period his powerful voice, his loyalty to his own country, his stern denunciation of those who had led Germany astray had a far greater influence in bringing America to the support of the Allies than many imagined. I have been very proud indeed of being admitted into Dr. Jowett's confidence. All my life I shall treasure the memory of many an illuminating conversation with one who is not only one of the greatest living preachers, but, what is more, a man whose whole life, in public or private, is an eloquent sermon.

## CHAPTER V

SOME MORE MINISTERIAL FRIENDS.—DR.  
CLIFFORD.—THE REV. JOHN MC NEILL.—GREAT  
SCOTTISH PREACHERS.—DR. W. J. DAWSON'S  
MEMORABLE STORY.

I OWE a good deal to that noble veteran, Dr. John Clifford. In the great Simultaneous Mission with which the Free Churches of England greeted the dawn of the new century, he and I were the missionaries at Birmingham. I remember that 1,400 enquirers were personally dealt with, in addition to 2,800 in special evangelistic services. What became of those 4,200 enquirers? The answer was given two years later when I paid a return visit to Birmingham. The Rev. Enoch Salt, ex-President of the Birmingham Free Church Council, in welcoming me, said the council had taken great pains to conserve the results of the mission. Of the 1,400 enquirers, 200 had been drafted at their own request to various churches connected with the Establishment (which demonstrated the fact that there was no proselytising), and the remaining 1,200 had been allocated to different Free Churches. The Council had made careful enquiries concerning the status of the converts at both the Central and the other missions, and from the returns received it would appear that 1,100 at least were in good standing as church members, while over 600 were still probationers.

The thing that has always impressed me most about

Dr. Clifford has been his genuine simplicity. When I conducted a mission in his own church at Westbourne Park, it was a liberal education to sit or kneel quietly in the enquiry room, and hear this lovable man of God dealing with intelligent, cultured young men who had intellectual difficulties regarding the Bible. I can hear him now, talking to those men like a father, and saying, "I am prepared to discuss all these points at the proper time and the proper place, but if you come as a sinner feeling the need of deliverance from sin, my only answer now is, Jesus! Let us settle that first, and talk about all the problems afterward in the light of a new-found joy."

I remember that in a Birmingham campaign Dr. Clifford preached five sermons from one text, and it looked as if he could have preached five more. The text was, "We are ambassadors for Christ. . . . Be ye reconciled to God." He is the grandest old man I know.

Once I was talking to him about some attack that had been made upon him in connection with his views regarding the higher criticism. "Doctor," I said, "they do not know you and your love for Jesus." "No," he said with a rather sad smile, "I'm afraid they don't even take the trouble to try and understand me."

I look upon my old friend, the Rev. John McNeill, as one of the greatest living preachers. Hundreds of good stories have been told about the irrepressible John. I wonder if this one is new. A man who was converted under his ministry at Glasgow had been a drunkard. One day he went to the breezy evangelist and said, "Well, Mr. McNeill, I'm a better father and a better husband, and I know I'm a better man, but there's one thing conquers me still. I get up in the morning determined not to do it any more, but before many hours have passed,

I'm taking snuff again. What do you think of me, Mr. McNeill?" "Think of ye mon?" cried John, "Eh, mon, it's verra plain. The Lord's got ye by the hearrt, but the devil's got ye by the nose!"

One of Mr. McNeill's old college friends who was in his class, told me another story. On a certain question day, old Dr. Candlish appealed to John. "Now, McNeill, can you give us the different theories that are held with regard to the story of Jonah and the whale?"

"Aye, doctor, I think I can do that," said John, "Lots of people think a big whale swallowed Jonah, or they believe the simple Bible statement that the Lord prepared some great fish that took him in, but a good many of the professors believe the whole thing was only a big 'cod'!"

I have known and admired that brilliant expositor, Dr. Campbell Morgan, for many years. In 1883, when my brother-in-law, Mr. Evans, was conducting the Hull Mission, huge gatherings being held in Hengler's Circus, Dr. Morgan came to Hull to succeed him, and remained in the city for eighteen months. I knew well from the first that his great gifts would carry him far, and it has been a joy to watch his subsequent career, and to retain his friendship.

One of my oldest friends is the Rev. Dr. W. L. Watkinson, that most charming and original preacher whom it has always been a joy to hear in the pulpit or on the platform. In a letter of introduction he gave me when I paid my second visit to America, the great preacher said characteristically (but without the famous "sniff"), "You appeal to the conscience and the intelligence of the people, which renders your ministry specially valuable. I appreciate the purity of your style and your instinctive taste, and nothing is to be gained by compromising this.

I feel sure the American churches will be greatly edified by you, and I only hope that they will not like you too well."

I have looked upon Dr. Watkinson as one of the greatest sermon builders of the last fifty years. He is a scientist up to date, a Christian philosopher, a prose poet, a sanctified wit, and an enthusiastic evangelical—which for any preacher is a pretty strong combination. I do not know his equal. Once I had the joy of speaking on the same platform as Dr. Watkinson. I was very nervous. I trembled all over, and he knew it. He asked the chairman to let him speak first, and I thought, "Now if he gives one of his great speeches where shall I come in?" But he made it very easy for me by his simple, homely address. I recall one characteristic phrase. "Mr. Chairman," he said, "I will not tell you a lot about my past. A man who lives on his past is like a dog living on his tail and any dog that did that—(a pause and a sniff)—would soon be stumped up!"

Another of my oldest friends is "Sam" Chadwick, the beloved Principal of Cliff College, who has sent out into the world so many keen, whole-hearted evangelists of the right type. I have always felt I belonged to the Cliff. Nowhere have I been more at home. The founder of the college, the Rev. Thomas Champness, was a great friend of mine. He christened my first baby at Newcastle. He was one of the mighty geniuses of the Methodist Church. He had a way of saying things that few other men could even see. He was one of the pioneers of aggressive evangelism. He would get a big bell and go into the middle of the nearest street and ring the bell until a crowd gathered. Then he would preach. If a few Methodist ministers did that to-day

there would be bigger congregations in some chapels. Cliff College and *The Joyful News* are a great monument to the work of Thomas and Mary Champness. I remember once Mr. Champness sent me a letter in which he said, "Take care of thy health. Wouldn't the devil delight to dance a horn-pipe on thy grave?" He added: "I believe the Holy Ghost delights in using strong men." Last Whitsuntide I spent one more glorious week-end with Mr. Chadwick at Cliff. The anniversary there, at which we preach in a marquee, and on the beautiful lawns—four or five services for 4,000 people in one day—is unique. Life there is one continuous "Hallelujah." The Cliff evangelists are doing a magnificent work in their missions all over the country.

I look back with thankfulness to the encouragement I received from that renowned Scottish preacher, Dr. Alexander Whyte. Here is one illustration of Dr. Whyte's thoughtfulness. Some years ago I went to Oxford to conduct a Free Church campaign. Dr. Whyte sent me a copy of his *Life of Newman*. "Read my Newman before you go," he wrote, "and if there is any little thing in it you could quote it might help you, as Newman is still a living force in Oxford." When I was starting for a tour round the world, Dr. Whyte sent me not only a gracious letter of commendation but a copy of his "*Bunyan's Characters*," which he thought I might like to read on the boat.

On my first visit to Scotland I told the story of my life in St. George's, Edinburgh, of which Dr. Whyte was the minister. He presided, and at the close he said, "Gipsy, I have heard many great men in that pulpit, but I never felt my heart so moved as it was to-night. I do not envy the man who listened to it with dry eyes."

I shall never forget Dr. Whyte's smile. It was obviously the effluence of a rich, noble, generous soul. It suggested a quarter of an acre of sunshine. I remember too in that mission the help I received from the late Dr. Bruce, who had never before attended such services as those I was conducting. He told his students that even if much of the enquiry room work was "tomfoolery" they must by no means forget to attend my meetings. Another famous preacher who played a part in that campaign was Dr. George Reith, of the Free College Church, who, speaking of our meetings in his church, said there had been nothing like them since the visit of Messrs. Moody and Sankey in 1874.

I owe a good deal to Professor James Denny, whom I have had the privilege of meeting several times. The last time I met him was in Glasgow, when we had tea together in the home of Dr. Reith, and Dr. Denny presided at my evening meeting. It was glorious to see that great scholar, whose books are classics, helping enquirers in the enquiry room. At the end of the evening, this gifted man of God turned to me and said, "Gipsy, I would gladly forego all my scholarship if I could thereby win more men to Christ as I have seen them won to-night."

On several occasions it has been my pleasure to meet Dr. James Moffatt, whose illuminating New Testament in Modern Speech I have so often used when preaching. I was preaching for him on one occasion and when I had concluded the sermon he walked up into the pulpit and said, "Gipsy, tell them if there are any here who would like to come into the vestry, the way is open to them." It was one of the joys of my life to see that distinguished scholar speaking words of wisdom and instruction to

ten fine young fellows who went into the vestry seeking the light. I only mention this incident in support of my contention that there never has been and never should be any incompatibility between the highest culture and the most aggressive evangelism.

I rejoiced to count among my friends that gallant gentleman, the Rev. Silvester Horne. He was one of the most brotherly men I ever met. I remember on one occasion during our Southport Free Church Council meetings he was talking in his vivacious way about the so-called New Theology that was causing so much stir. I had just returned from America and gave some account of the scenes I had witnessed there. "Well," said Silvester Horne over the tea-table, "a story like that smashes all the theories of the New Theology to shreds!"

When I was at Bradford recently I met my old friend the Rev. W. Bradfield, who was chairman of the committee of my mission there; I little thought that within a few weeks he was to be taken Home. Mr. Bradfield was my minister when I first went to Cambridge. When I was going to South Africa he made a touching little speech in which he said: "I have had the honour of the private friendship of Gipsy Smith, and of having his family as members of my church. His daughter was one of the staunchest and best workers I have had. When I was a boy," Mr. Bradfield added, "W. G. Grace used to come and visit some friends in the village in which I lived. What delighted us boys was that Grace was always willing to play in the village team. I have found the same kind of thing characteristic of Gipsy Smith. When he came to my circuit, without invitation he came and gave me the strong and splendid help that he can give."

Twenty years later Mr. Bradfield welcomed me at Bradford with another very gracious and kindly speech, but alas, he was in enfeebled health and his noble life on earth was nearly ended. One night during the Mission in Eastbrook Hall I said, "Will any of you rise to signify that from this moment you desire to lead better Christian lives?" The saintly Methodist preacher who was my chairman was the very first to rise. This was one of his last appearances on a public platform.

One of the most remarkable men I ever met was Chancellor Day, of Syracuse University, New York. He was six feet four inches in height and was a giant in other ways. When I first knew him, thirty years ago, he was pastor of the Calvary Methodist Church in New York, the largest church in the city. Once when he met me he said, "You are coming to preach for me and I shall advertise you as the Rev. Rodney Smith." I said, "No." He said, "Certainly I shall." "Then," I said firmly, "I'm sorry, but I won't come." "You won't?" he cried. "No," I said, "You put on the bills plain Gipsy Smith, or I can't come." "Well," he said with a hearty laugh, "that is an ultimatum, but I must say I like you all the better for it. 'Gipsy' it shall be."

In my South African mission I visited at Wellington the home of the beloved and honoured Dr. Andrew Murray, around whom had grown up a great educational centre. In his church we had a wonderful service long to be remembered.

In New York in 1888 I had the privilege of hearing Dr. DeWitt Talmage in his own church. I have the impression that he was never heard at his best in England, either as lecturer or preacher. His power over great audiences in America was simply enormous, and I felt

when I heard him for the first time, what a great gift the American churches had in such a mighty preacher.

Some good stories might be told of Talmage. There was a paper in America called *Puck*, which in some ways resembled our *Punch*. It was always taking off the great preacher, and was particularly fond of caricaturing his mouth, which was of generous proportions. Once a newspaper man went to interview the doctor. One of the first questions he asked was, "Well, doctor, what do you think of *Puck*?" "Oh," replied the preacher, "I like *Puck*. It is the only paper that does my mouth justice."

Talmage was a walking encyclopedia. He could rattle off dates and figures as easily as some men eat their breakfast. The last time I saw him he told me a beautiful little story. One day Mrs. Talmage went out early, and could not return until night; and the doctor was out too, when their little daughter fell down one or two stairs and hurt herself a little. Somebody picked her up and said, "Now be a brave little girl." The child did not utter a sound. Late in the evening the mother came in. Then the child ran to her, threw her arms about her neck, and cried as if her little heart would break. "Did you not cry when you fell?" asked the father. "No," said the child. "How was that?" "Well, you see," the child replied. "I had no one to cry to." "Ah," said Dr. Talmage in telling the story. "No matter how often he tumbles, the child of God always has somebody to cry to!"

In all the years I have thought with special veneration and regard of one preacher who probably never knew how much I owed to him. When I was converted in a little Primitive Methodist Chapel in Fitzroy Street, Cambridge—it has long since disappeared—the preacher was the Rev. George Warner. I cannot remember his text,

I cannot even recall the heads of his discourse. All I know is that as he spoke I made up my mind that I must give myself to Christ. Mr. Warner invited any who wished to take that course to go forward and kneel at the communion-rail, and I—a wild, untutored gipsy boy—was the first to respond.

And when I write of preachers who have influenced me, I cannot help thinking of many whom I have been privileged to influence. The first who comes to mind is my old friend, the Rev. Dr. W. J. Dawson, who told the world that I was the means, under God, of changing the whole outlook of his ministry. Dr. Dawson told the story in his book, "The Evangelistic Note" as follows:—

"In March of 1903 I was invited to read a paper at the National Free Church Council held at Brighton. What were my impressions? The chief was the new atmosphere of spiritual warmth in which I found myself. I had grown cold through isolation; in fellowship I found the thrill of new, warm life. The climax came in the middle of the week when a midnight meeting was arranged. On that memorable night the members of the Council, a thousand strong, marched through the streets of Brighton, gathering in the waifs and wastrels of the streets, collecting the drunkards, picking up the sons and daughters of vice and finally returned to the Dome at Brighton an hour before midnight with such a congregation as I have never seen.

"Gipsy Smith gave the address. It was simple, masculine, moving, and entirely free from sensationalism. He pleaded with the lost and weary then and there to give themselves to Christ. At the close of the address I saw what I had not seen since I was a boy in Cornwall, scores of men and women rising for prayer, and pouring into

the extemporised enquiry room to seek instant deliverance from their sins. And then I knew what was the missing element in my own ministry, what was the vital deficiency in my own Church. It was evangelistic fervour, the spirit of the Christian propaganda.

"I returned to my church and my work, conscious of a sudden change in myself which affected every fibre of thought. I could not then, and cannot now, explain the change. Nothing was altered and yet everything was transformed. Something new was at work in me, something that spoke in the very tones of my voice, a power that subdued and breathed through me. One supreme thought possessed me—only by the power of a living evangelism could my ministry and my church be henceforth justified. To introduce that power into such a church as mine might make or break it. How far would my people respond to the new note? I did not know, but I felt I must take the risk. And as it turned out there was no risk. When the proposition was made that Gipsy Smith should hold a mission at the Highbury Quadrant there was a response which surprised me. That all my people were in active sympathy I cannot affirm; human nature being what it is, that was not to be expected. The idea was new, and had to be assimilated. But the mere suggestion of a mission evoked such wonderful results. Such a manifestation of zeal among the people, such a quickening of spiritual interest, that I could not doubt I was moving on the path of God's will.

"The most remarkable feature of the mission," continued Dr. Dawson, "was the sudden revelation of the awful tragedy of life in the immediate neighbourhood of the church, of which no one had been conscious. Pagan London indeed lay at the very church door—the London

of Godless wealth, abominable vice, helpless poverty, drunkenness, crime, lust and misery. Into my church, with all its associations of cultured worship, there swept on a given night a mass of men and women far more hopeless and depraved than those that made the midnight audience in the Dome at Brighton. We also went out to seek the lost, and the lost were there because we fetched them. My people, my deacons and workers, a thousand strong, marched at midnight, and gathered from the gutters and the public houses a vast congregation of those for whose souls no man had cared, and just as I had discovered a spiritual readiness among my own people which I had never suspected, so now I found a response to the call of Christ among the lowest of the people which both thrilled and amazed me. I am still astonished as I reflect on it all. I am astonished to know how easy it is to get the people if you really want them. I am yet more astonished at the miraculous way in which a single spark of enthusiasm for souls, once kindled, is able to pass like a flame through a great Church, and get it moving in a crusade of love, pity and human service."

I have quoted these remarks by my friend Dr. Dawson because they are one illustration of a fact I have insisted upon right throughout my ministry. I was the first in England to begin the midnight meetings for drunkards, urging many years ago as I ceaselessly do to-day, that the non-church-goer is not half such a problem as the non-going church; that the outsider can easily be reached if only the insider wants him.

Regarding the mission at his church, Dr. Dawson wrote:

"Within nine days the aggregate congregations assembled in the Quadrant Church exceeded 20,000. Six hun-

dred have entered the enquiry room. . . . I have preached to thieves, I have done mission work in the lowest parts of Manchester and Southwark, but I think I never saw a congregation like that at the midnight meeting. The reek of alcohol was overpowering. Scores of men and women were drunk. . . . No sooner did Gipsy Smith appeal to them than they began to move toward the enquiry room. All kinds of people were there. One poor old travelling tinker told me he had never had a Bible. A housebreaker with four sentences against him was there. He went back to the doss-house and sent his mates up the next night. One of the latter had been educated at Magdalen College School and had been a chorister. The mission convinced me that it was possible to reach the masses."

Not long afterwards Dr. Dawson went to America on a tour which he expected would be occupied mainly with public lectures and occasional sermons. "I had a conversation with Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis in his study," he says, "I was moved to tell him all about the recent changes in my own life and ministry. I described the Brighton meetings, the mission in my own church and the new spiritual life that had come from it to my congregation and myself. I was moved to tears and so was he. At last he cried, 'We must have a mission in Plymouth Church!' " Dr. Dawson at length consented. His time of absence was extended. He conducted his services on evangelistic lines. He had opportunities in Chicago, Boston, Hartford and many other places of conversing with ministers and discussing the possibilities of a great evangelistic mission. The general feeling was expressed that if Gipsy Smith could influence a man of Dr. Dawson's brilliant gifts and high culture, he could do a great work in a city

like Boston. Accordingly I was invited to undertake a month's campaign there, and in this ministers took part who had previously shown little or no sympathy with evangelistic work. It was stated that no such unity had been possible for a quarter of a century.

I notice, by the way, that someone recently referred in print to the "well-known weakness of Mr. Smith to belittle the churches and to assume that the majority of the preachers are indifferent to the winning of souls." Whoever wrote that does not know me at all. As God has led me, I have spoken as plainly as I could on occasion of indifference and apathy where it does exist, but I have never had the slightest desire to make wholesale sweeping indictments. I have my weaknesses. I know them far better than anyone else does. I pray God to forgive me if any word I utter is unfair, or gives needless offence to any. Thousands of preachers have been my friends. Those who have really known and understood me have brought against me no charge of this kind.

I have addressed hundreds of meetings held for my ministerial brethren only, and I have said to them word for word what I have said on every other occasion: their supreme aim should be not brilliance or cleverness or smartness, but the winning of souls. If any of them take offence at my plain speaking I cannot help it. God forbid that I should wound any one of God's true ambassadors. I say nothing about the attitude of "the majority" to direct personal soul-winning. I simply say that those who do not seek conversions (and everybody knows there are many such) have missed their vocation. The Gospel is not entertainment, an essay, a lecture, something to tickle the ears and stimulate the brain. It is the good news of salvation. I worship, as I have opportunity, in

churches all over the country, as keenly appreciative a listener to the eloquent preacher in the city or the "local" in the village Bethel. One minister says when I am in a pew I am a congregation and a choir in myself. I praise God for all the devoted men who are preaching with urgency and power that souls may be saved. As long as I have voice I shall continue to pray that their number may be vastly increased. In season and out of season I shall urge those who are building up a reputation for mere eloquence and oratory to put aside their brilliant theological, philosophical, historical or poetical essays, and, just as Ian MacLaren put it, "say a guid word for Jesus."

Once in an American city I went to a conference of ministers. After some discussion one of the brethren said, "Perhaps the Gipsy could give us a suitable topic for to-morrow's sermon." They laughed and waited for my reply. I said, "As it happens, I have been studying the list of services in your leading paper, and I have noted the titles of your sermons. I have only one suggestion to make. For a change why not preach Jesus Christ?" I cannot think that any who have noted advertisements of sermon subjects even in this country, will say the suggestion was wholly unwarranted.

Writing of me in *The Christian World* once, my friend Dr. Clifford, said, "He knows his work and does it. He does not quarrel with pastors. He is their helper." That is what I have always tried to be.

I have always asked my brother preachers to sit by me, as well as stand by me, as my aim is simply to be the application of their sermons. I always stand by the preachers. I don't criticise them. I owe them too much. If there was nobody to evangelise, there would be nobody to pastor. You must bring in, before you can bring up.

You must disciple, before you can discipline. You must bear, before you rear.

All I say to ministers is: You are in the ministry not only to preach, but to expect immediate results. Hand-picked fruit is the best in the market. Go for the hand-picked fruit, and when that fruit is too high and you cannot reach it, and you have not got a ladder, ask for some godly brethren to come along and help you shake the tree.

## CHAPTER VI

MEMORIES OF GENERAL BOOTH.—SOME DISTINGUISHED SCHOLARS AND LAYMEN.—PROFESSOR DRUMMOND, MR. LLOYD GEORGE, W. T. STEAD, AND OTHERS.

WHEN I think of those who influenced me in my earliest ministry I think, next to my own father, I owed most to Mr. and Mrs. William Corbridge, with whom I stayed during my six months' work for the Salvation Army at Bolton. Mr. Corbridge was a man who knew and loved every page of his Bible. He and his devoted wife treated me like a son. It was while I was with them that I laid the foundation of such educational equipment as I have possessed.

I need hardly say I always had the warmest feelings of love and admiration for General Booth. I have never forgotten that he gave me my first opportunity as an evangelist, and put me in the way of an experience that was invaluable.

It was I think about the year 1875 that my father and his brothers got into touch with the Rev. William Booth, who had founded what was then called the Christian Mission. He gave them great encouragement in their evangelistic work. "The way to keep bright and happy," he used to tell them, "is to work for God." Shortly after I had been converted, being then aged seventeen, I got into touch with the Christian Mission, which had 27

mission stations and 35 missionaries, all under Mr. Booth, who was popularly known by his workers as "the Bishop." It was Mr. William Corbridge who wrote to Mr. Booth and advised him to get hold of me.

I shall never forget my first conversation with the General. He took me aside and said, "Rodney, have you a desire to become a preacher?" My father had talked to him about me, and had mentioned the idea of sending me to Spurgeon's College. I said, "Yes." The General said, "Will you leave your gipsy life and come to us to be an evangelist?"

"A what?" I said.

"An evangelist."

I had never heard the word.

I said, "Do you think I shall make one? If so, my prayer is answered and I will come."

The next morning I was walking among the tents and they asked me what General Booth had done for me.

"I don't know what the word is," I said, "but it means to preach."

That was the beginning. I always loved General Booth because he saw something in that gipsy boy that might be of possible usefulness in the world, and gave it a chance when nobody else did.

I remember one conversation I had with him. I was but a boy and had not long been out of the gipsy tent. He took me aside as he often did in those early days and talked to me. As he took my arm and walked a few steps with me he said, "Rodney, I suppose you take a few minutes every night to pray and square up accounts with God for the day." I was a little surprised that he should ask me that.

"Sir," I said, "will you say that again?"

"Yes, I suppose you take a few minutes every night before going to bed to pray to God and square up accounts for the day, don't you?"

And I answered, "No sir, no sir, I don't."

"You don't!"

"No," I said, "I can't leave it until night; the account would be too big, the task too great. I pray with Him at all times throughout the day. I have my settling moments many times during the day."

"Ah!" said William Booth, "I can see you don't need much instruction from me there."

Looking back upon the life of the Grand Old Man, whom I knew so well, I always say that William Booth was one of the greatest souls God ever gave to the world. He always treated me in the most kind and fatherly way. On one occasion, when I was a very young officer, I happened to say something in the presence of other officers which he did not like and he rebuked me with a severity which was hardly justified. But when I quietly remarked that I did not think Jesus would have spoken so sharply he thought for a moment; then he rose, came round to where I was sitting, put his hands on my shoulders and said simply, "My boy, you are right, I beg your pardon. Jesus would not have spoken like that." It was that kind of thing that made one admire and love him more than ever.

Many years ago, General Booth sent me to Chatham, to try and stop a certain quarrel between two sections. When I arrived I found the position was almost hopeless. I attended the meeting and the audience sat and stared at me for some time, no one speaking a word. There were 39 of them:—Talk about the 39 articles! At last one said, "Well, why don't you begin?" I said, "I *have*

begun." I had been diagnosing the case. They told me I was very young. I said, "If I live long enough I ought soon to get over that." Things did not improve, and at last the General came down himself. There were a few conversions, but still the atmosphere was not conducive to good results. I wrote somewhat unhappily to the General, and I treasure his reply. He wrote, "My boy, never forget that your real power for service will depend upon your personal goodness." I hope I never have forgotten it.

When Mr. Moody and Mr. Sankey were conducting their first great meetings in London at Burdett Hall, Bow, a friend took Mr. Sankey out on the Saturday for a drive into the Forest. This gentleman knew of my father and his two brothers, the three converted Gipsies, and brought him to the gipsy camp. I did not know very much about these things. I was only a little wild boy in the woods. I did not know anything about Mr. Sankey, but when he drove up in the little pony-trap he looked a big, beaming sort of man; so I got round as a child would, and climbed up on the hub of the wheel. Mr. Sankey put his hand on my head and said, "The Lord bless this boy and make him a preacher."

I was not converted then, but I never forgot it. When I first visited America I found Mr. Sankey and asked him if he remembered the incident. He said, "Of course, what became of the boy?" "Well," I said, "he is here."

When I conducted my first mission in Glasgow I met the late Professor Henry Drummond, who was very kind to me. When we were chatting together I told him I had been working for seven weeks in seven churches and had not given the same address twice. This seemed to surprise him, and he asked many questions about my life

and the manner in which I prepared my discourses. I was greatly attracted by the sweetness of his spirit and the graciousness of his disposition. Henry Drummond always appealed to the best in one, and I have never met a preacher in whose company I felt more at ease. There was nothing overawing about him, and the shyest man on earth need not be afraid of him, even though he conveyed an extraordinary impression of dignity and greatness. He was one of the most cultured evangelists that the world ever knew.

Often in recent days I have quoted a well-known saying of Drummond's. Writing to his friend Professor Barbour in Edinburgh, during the second Moody campaign, in regard to dealing with the people in the enquiry room, person by person, he said to his friend, "The enquiry room reveals now in this campaign, as in the first campaign, that the vast majority of church members know no more about the new birth than the Hottentot. They know the letter of the law as well as they know their own name, but they do not understand saving faith in Christ; they do not understand spiritual experience." Those are strong words; the pity is that in regard to many they are all too true still.

A few years ago I had the pleasure of breakfasting with Mr. Lloyd George, the then Premier, at 10 Downing Street. Mr. Lloyd George, who never made any secret of the fact that he believed with all his heart that England needed a great spiritual revival, listened with delight to some stories I told him of remarkable conversions I had seen. He talked of the intense love of home that characterised his fellow countrymen and was particularly pleased that he had had something to do with the setting apart of one day at the Welsh Eistedd-

fod for the singing of hymns. As he said, it was something to rejoice over that a crowd of people would willingly pay for the privilege of hearing great hymn-singing.

Nothing impressed me so much as the homeliness and naturalness of Mr. Lloyd George. At an hour when many who bore such huge burdens and responsibilities might be expected to appear jaded, if not irritable, he was as fresh and smiling as a spring morning and during breakfast was full of fun.

"Now, Gipsy," he said in his breezy way, "you must have some of this sausage, for it's Mrs. Lloyd George's pig, and she made it."

"What!" I cried, "made the pig?" How he laughed!

Mr. Lloyd George's personality has always attracted me. I have heard him say more than once what he said in his memorable message to the churches: that only a religious revival can save England. The kind of mission which so many people call "emotional" appeals to his temperament. He agrees with me that our religion is worth getting enthusiastic about, that we shall be stiff enough when we are dead, and that when all the political excitement has evaporated, it is the warm, glowing gospel preacher who has the power to shake England.

I am not a politician. I have never shone in that sphere. I try to keep abreast of political affairs as intelligently as I know how. In my own work I acknowledge "No party creed or faction." If I can bring men to Christ I can trust them to vote all right. I say nothing about Mr. Lloyd George's politics, but I love the man.

When I went to America in 1921 I had a most kindly letter from him. "On the strength of my long friendship," wrote the then Premier, "I venture to send you

my best wishes for the success of your enterprise. The world experience of the past six years renders such efforts as yours particularly timely. Indeed, effective reconciliation and permanent reconstruction are in my opinion unattainable apart from the acceptance by the world of those great and fundamental principles to which you have given such unique and effective expression in your long and wonderful ministry."

When I was in South Africa I once had the pleasure of meeting Lord Milner, who invited me to luncheon at Government House. The then High Commissioner was much interested in hearing of my work, with which he expressed hearty sympathy. He could not attend the meetings himself, but he sent Lord Henry Seymour and two ladies so that Government House should not be unrepresented. I remember a lady telling me at this time that during an anxious political crisis she went to see Lord Milner and found him reading his Bible. As he laid the volume down he said, "I could never get on without this Book in time of stress or worry."

When this year I was conducting a mission in Glasgow, my host was that gifted, cultured and charming preacher the Rev. Hubert L. Simpson, the minister of Westbourne U. F. Church, and I recalled an interesting and illuminating incident in which Mr. Simpson's brother played a part.

I was summoned by the British Government from my work in France, and was told in London at the Foreign Office that I was to proceed quickly to America. I said, "But what about my boys? I don't want to leave the boys. I love preaching my Master to them." They said, "Well, we think you can serve the boys best by going to America and helping America to speed up."

Just before I left London, I was invited to the Savoy

Hotel to a luncheon to meet the Premier of Canada and two or three other important American officials, and the chief speaker at that luncheon was the late Lord Moulton. He was the expert on high explosives for the Allies during the war, and was one of the greatest scientists of Europe. In his speech, after saying many wonderful things about the war, he turned to the preachers who were in that room and said, "I want to say to you preachers that my only hope for this poor old world, that is marching to sobs and sighs and broken hearts everywhere, is—the preaching of Jesus."

I may say I was proud to know the Moulton family well. Lord Moulton was the son of a godly Methodist preacher. His nephew, the Rev. James Hope Moulton, who was torpedoed during the war, was one of the greatest Greek scholars in the world.

When I got to the boat I found, returning from a Conference in London on the War, the President of the Board of Education for China with his secretary. When he learned I was one of the passengers he sought an interview with me. He could not speak English, but his secretary could, and for two hours we talked in his suite on that great boat, and when we were parting he said to me, through his interpreter, "Gipsy Smith, my only hope for my country, China, is Jesus."

On that same boat was Professor Simpson, who was the expert on Russian affairs, during the War, for the Allies. He was the grand-nephew of the great Professor, Sir James Simpson, the discoverer of chloroform, his father being the great physician in Scotland, Sir Alexander Simpson. Talking one day about the failure, the heartbreak, the misery, and the sins of the world, he said, "Gipsy Smith, religion as lived and preached has failed;

education has failed; culture is a huge colossal failure. We see that militarism failed absolutely; and my prayer to-day is, 'Oh, God, scatter those who delight in war!' " Then Professor Simpson turned, and with his characteristic mental alertness, and yet scholarly caution, he said, "Gipsy Smith, the only hope of the world is Jesus Christ." He added, "Jesus Christ has never failed, because He has never been properly tried."

During my fifth visit to America Dr. Milburn, the blind man eloquent, and Chaplain to the Senate, also a member of the church at Washington where my mission was held, became my friend. One day I chanced to mention that I was not ordained. At once the dear old man came and put his hands on my shoulders saying, "I will ordain you, without a question!"

Dr. Milburn presented me to President Cleveland, told him about my work, and invited him to one of my meetings. The President was exceedingly kind, and said if he had had earlier notice he and his wife would gladly have come to the mission.

During my visit to America in 1919 I had a chat with the late President Roosevelt, who said, "America needs the Gospel you have come to preach, and may God help you to preach it with power." Mr. Roosevelt was a striking personality—one of the most interesting men I have ever met. He was thoroughly in sympathy with the kind of work I was trying to do.

One day I had to speak in President Harding's church in Washington. As he had to leave the city before the service he sent for me. "Come in, come in; I know all about you," he cried when I was announced, and as he greeted me it was like being received by some healthy, jolly Methodist farmer. Busy as he was, he found time

for a kindly chat, and at the same time Secretary Hughes and other statesmen came in and joined in in the welcome.

The famous journalist, W. T. Stead, was a great friend of mine. Sometimes I used to compare his eyes to two lakes, kißed by the sun into beauty. He was an amazing man. In the midst of his busy life he always went to the week-night prayer meeting of his church. Once during the Welsh revival I was with him at Pontypridd. At the close of a Sunday night service a young collier came up and asked if he might speak to Mr. Stead. "The fact is, Mr. Stead," he remarked, "I represent a number of young colliers who have been reading almost everything you have written, and you knocked the infidelity out of us. In this mission we have all been converted, but we want you to know you prepared the way for it. It was you who knocked away the poor props we were leaning on." Stead was quite overcome by his emotion as he listened to this unexpected tribute.

On the last occasion on which I saw him in his office he cried out, "Come in, you imp of the devil!" "I'm coming," I said, "but why *that* form of greeting?" "Why," he said, "you really are a nuisance to me, for every time I read or hear about your meetings I feel I must put down my pen, and leave this chair, and start out as an evangelist." At that last interview he said, "Now, Gipsy, do you know how I'm going to finish?" I said, "No." He said, "Well, I'm going to gaol once more, and then I shall be kicked to death in the streets of London." I said, "Whoever told you that?" He said, "Julia." Alas! "Julia" did not tell Stead of the awful fate which awaited the *Titanic*. I could not follow him in his spiritualistic ideas, but I knew he was a saint. I have been in a hotel when all the diners hushed their con-

versation to listen to him, he was so absolutely brilliant. When he began his great peace campaign, in which he interviewed the crowned heads of Europe, I met him at Scarborough. I was conducting a mission there for the free churches, and we lent him the building we were using—a circus—for an afternoon meeting. The mayor of the town presided, and in the anteroom said, "Well, Mr. Stead, I think it is time we went on to the platform." "That may be," said Stead, "but I never do anything without praying first." And all in that little room went down on their knees. When Stead was called upon to speak he said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I never speak without praying first," and he earnestly asked for God's blessing on the cause. This was my first meeting with Stead. I turned to the Rev. Mr. Hall, pastor of a Scarborough church, and I said "This is a revelation to me. I have never known *this* Stead at all." He said, "Oh, I was his pastor for some years, and I never knew him to miss a week-night prayer meeting or to fail to take part in it."

While I am writing, many fine tributes are being paid to the memory of the late Sir W. Robertson Nicholl. I do not know that any man influenced me more than he in the last quarter of a century. I once told him that in my movements about the world, I had found no man who had done more to tether the pulpits of the Church of Christ to the Cross. I am inclined to think his leading article in *The British Weekly* helped and guided more preachers, in keeping them true to the great fundamentals of our faith, than any other writings of the time. I always found him most kind and sympathetic.

It was with deep regret that I heard a while ago of the death of my old friend, Mr. W. H. Jude, with whom I

was so often associated in evangelistic work. He was a brilliant musician, who consecrated his great gifts and helped to popularise some very beautiful and effective hymn tunes. In his preface to a favourite selection of my gospel songs to which he had written accompaniments in his own vivacious and tuneful way, Mr. Jude wrote: "The singers and the songs of the world of fashion and frivolity are soon forgotten, but a man who speaks and sings into the hearts and lives of the people as Gipsy Smith has done for the last quarter of a century, has a retrospective glory here, and a consciousness of happy remembrance in the life to come. The Devil's machinery, though constructed and made apparently perfect by the worldly expert, must eventually go out of date, and give place to the grandeur of God's original conception, namely, the beautifying and carrying out of His unerring laws of rectitude and right. For the bringing about of this grand result, Gipsy Smith has proved himself a faithful worker in the Lord's vineyard."

It has been my joy to have the friendship and sympathy of many prominent business men. I can never put into words all that has come into my life through my friendship with Sir Henry Holloway. Not long ago, I was in the National Liberal Club, the guest of Sir Henry. While he was out of the room a number of journalists and business men began to talk about him and about his fine Christian character. One said to me, "Do you know the sort of impression Henry Holloway has made on the business life of this city? We say there is not meanness enough in Henry Holloway to make one little devil." What a glorious compliment for any man to earn!

That reminds me of another beautiful tribute. Once I was having dinner with Conrad Skinner, coxswain of the

Cambridge crew, who was one of my converts in South Africa, and young Howard Watkins-Jones, and glorious Clifford Read, who as a padre gave his life for his country.

I asked these three brilliant fellows who were the most popular men leaving Cambridge that year. They replied, without hesitation, "The Holloway brothers." I said, "They are such splendid sportsmen?" "No," they said, "it is their grand moral character. A man dare not think, let alone say, a vile thing in the presence of Bernard Holloway."

When Bernard Holloway went to college, because he was a king of men on the sporting field he was invited very soon to wine suppers and other dissipations. But he said "No."

"My father does not drink; my mother, my brothers and sisters do not drink, and not a drop of drink for me," he said, "and if you invite me to your suppers there will be no wine for me."

And when Bernard was killed, hundreds of British boys wrote to Lady Holloway to say how they had loved and admired him, and how his life had influenced them.

My friend Mr. Porritt, to whose book of reminiscences I have referred, tells in that volume two stories which I am permitted to quote here. "For many years," he says, "Gipsy Smith was the missionary of the National Church Council, which made all his engagements and took all the responsibility for the finances of his missions, paying him a fixed salary. This was an excellent arrangement for the Free Church Council and an especially good one for Gipsy Smith, who thus avoided all the suspicion of profiteering in the Gospel which beslimes so much professional evangelism. Two of his American Evangelistic

Campaigns were under the aegis of the Free Church Council—a fact which takes out any sting that might have lurked in a good story of one of Gipsy's Atlantic voyages. Following his inveterate habit of taking any and every opportunity for 'personal dealing' with any one with whom he might be travelling, Gipsy talked to some of the ladies who were voyagers on the liner. None of them resented his earnest concern about their souls. He has 'a way with him' which disarmed them. One of them, a well-known American vaudeville actress, asked a travelling companion of the evangelist, who the dark gentleman with mesmeric eyes was. 'That is Gipsy Smith, the famous evangelist,' she was told. 'Gipsy Smith?' replied the vaudeville actress, 'Gipsy Smith? Oh, yes, I remember now. Of course! I followed him one week in Omaha. Say, he's a dandy artist! He hadn't left a dollar in the town!'

Mr. Porritt also tells this story: "One day Gipsy Smith was lunching at the National Liberal Club with a little group of friends, and was telling us some of his remarkable experience at some mission he had been conducting in the Midlands. The late Rev. Thomas Law, the secretary of the National Free Church Council, was one of the party. So was Sir Henry Holloway, and, I think Rev. Silvester Horne. One of the old waiters, a veteran who is forgiven many liberties, was serving at our table. On his way to the kitchen he passed another waiter, and in a far-travelling whisper remarked: 'I've got a blooming Bible class at my table.'"

When Mrs. Smith and I were amongst the 2,000 guests at King Edward's Coronation luncheon, I could not help thinking of the day when, at the age of seventeen, I first sat down to a table in a real brick house, and ner-

vously handled a serviette, wondering whatever it was for. I have dined with distinguished statesmen, politicians, journalists, medical men—leaders in every profession, whose names I need not catalogue here. I remember my friend Sir Thomas Barclay once said to me, "Gipsy, you are in great danger, you need to be prayed for." I replied that I knew it, but I kept a humbling instrument in my study—the old knife with which my father made the clothes' pegs which I sold at a penny a dozen.

When I am thinking of all the interesting folk with whom it has been my privilege to associate I call to mind one pathetic meeting. When the popular poetess, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, was going home to America to die, I sat by her several times during that ocean trip. One day, with a tired sigh, she said to me, "Gipsy, I have come at last to the place where I feel all I need is God. I ask for your prayers."

Yes, we all come there at last. We send for Him at the funeral when we ought to have Him at the christening, and when the wedding bells ring and the orange blossom is worn. We send for Him when the colour fades from the cheek and the brightness goes out of the eye. Whatever one's position in the world, whatever one's company, one's soul can be satisfied only as one feeds from the tables which God spreads, and drinks from the fountains which He supplies.

The brainiest and bravest men that the world ever knew sat at the feet of Jesus. They think it a glorious thing to be Christians. The world's greatest scholars are in love with Jesus Christ. It is my privilege to know them and to call some of them my intimate friends. They put Jesus where He ought to be. Lord Tennyson was walking with somebody in his garden one afternoon. His

friend said, "Lord Tennyson, what is Jesus Christ to you?"

The poet turned his eyes to a little flower and said, "What the sun is to that flower. Jesus Christ is my very life."

I have mentioned Professor Simpson, who discovered chloroform. He was once asked, "What is the greatest discovery you ever made?"

He answered, "The greatest discovery I ever made is that I have a Saviour."

## CHAPTER VII

AFTER FORTY YEARS.—A WONDERFUL TOUR.—  
SHEFFIELD.—BRADFORD.—NEWCASTLE.—LON-  
DON.—PLYMOUTH.

It so happens that within recent months I have had unusual opportunities of renewing my acquaintance with the scenes of my early ministry, and of indulging in retrospection.

In the middle of my American campaign of 1921-1922, I was asked if on my return to England in the spring I would undertake a campaign in the Homeland under the auspices of the Wesleyan Methodist Home Mission Department. I am a loyal member of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. It is the church I love. I am not a sectarian nor am I a nonsectarian. My aim has ever been not to make Methodists, but to make saints. But it was with peculiar pleasure and delight that I accepted this invitation. I may say at once that the winter campaign of 1922-1923 exceeded all my expectations. It was a great and overwhelming revelation of the readiness of the people in my own country to respond to the gospel appeal. The secretary of the Home Mission Committee, the Rev. F. Luke Wiseman, a great preacher, a great organiser, a great musician and a great soul, planned visits to eight great centres, in addition to minor engagements, and in September, 1922, I plunged

into the work with great joy, a beginning being made at Sheffield.

For many reasons the Sheffield Mission was memorable. We had glorious meetings, with great audiences of over 3,000, in the Victoria Hall, the fine headquarters of the Sheffield Mission. The Superintendent of that mission, the Rev. George McNeal, was converted at one of my meetings when he was a lad in a business house at Burnley, thirty-one years before. I had a warm welcome at Sheffield, for I used to work here forty-four years ago, and there were still many who remembered my earliest meetings at the old Rockingham Street Hall when I was but eighteen years of age. I cannot stay to describe the meetings in detail, but one or two special features must be mentioned. The young people's meeting was very remarkable, for when I asked the audience of 3,000 (so tightly packed that most of the young people were sitting two on one seat) who would surrender to Christ then and there, no fewer than 1,000 sprang to their feet and passed to the enquiry room. I believe during the mission there were about 2,500 enquirers. A feature which I have not seen repeated since was a wonderful Roll of Honour prepared by Mr. H. H. Roberts, the Senior Cliff College Evangelist, on which the name of every convert, with the church of his choice, if any, was inscribed. Here for the first time we tried an experiment which had most encouraging results. A special meeting for ex-service men was planned, and the scenes at this were so amazing that I decided such a meeting must be included in every subsequent mission of this series. The chairman of the Campaign Council was my old friend the Rev. Samuel Chadwick, and Cliff College

students, full of enthusiasm, came and helped to kindle the revival fire.

I must say a word or two about the much-discussed meeting for the unemployed which was a unique experience in my career. There were 40,000 unemployed in Sheffield at the time. I thought it would be a kindly and Christian thing to call together as many of them as possible and express sympathy with them and give them a word of cheer. A certain small, but very active, Communistic section chose to misconstrue our motives and to come to the Victoria Hall with the express determination of wrecking the meeting. Consequently, to the disgust of the more temperate and moderate men, there was almost violent interruption from the very beginning. The extremists tried to break up the gathering. The London papers had big headlines: "Gipsy Smith howled down," and so on. As a matter of fact, I was not howled down. There was never any question of calling in the aid of the police. For about an hour I stood and smiled in the face of continuous interruption, but I got a word in here and there for the Master. In many ways it was a painful experience, but after all the hostile shouting of the rougher element, which even persisted when I tried to pray, there were wonderful results when I retired from the platform and went into the vestry. A beautiful girl came in and said, "Gipsy, I have been deeply affected by what I have seen. I feel I must give my heart to Jesus." I turned to those about me and said, "Here is one note of music amid all the discord." But that was not all. Some of the ringleaders in the disturbance were shamed. They came to subsequent meetings and were converted. One man who during my prayer had shouted, "We don't want any of that God stuff," came and con-

fessed Christ on his knees. One effect of that strange, exciting meeting was to bring still greater crowds to the hall. At a later meeting I suggested that we should have a special collection for the unemployed, and amid loud cheering this was agreed to.

At Sheffield, in the pouring rain, we had our first "public house sweep." Many years ago I introduced this feature into my work, insisting that if only the Church would go out and invite the men in the public houses to come to a meeting, there would be no difficulty in getting them. At Sheffield I went into about a dozen public houses, being received in several with cries of, "We know you Mr. Smith; you're a sport," "Good old Gip," and so on. At the late meeting there was continuous interruption by scores of drunken men who wanted to speak or sing solos, but there were some glorious results.

The next great mission was at Bradford, where the principal meetings were held in the famous Eastbrook Hall. Perhaps the most memorable events here were the extraordinary women's meetings at a big picture house, when there was such a crush that the police had to be fetched to persuade four or five hundred women who overcrowded the gangways, to leave the building; and the ex-service men's meeting, which was followed late in the evening by a procession to the Bradford Cenotaph. For the first time I had a beautiful wreath, which I said I would place on the Cenotaph before I went to rest. I asked who of the men would come with me. "All of us," they cried, and to the surprise of the police who wondered what was happening so late in the evening, the whole congregation marched down the streets with me to the Memorial.

At Bradford there were about 2,000 enquirers. At the young people's meeting, a thousand accepted Christ.

Next I conducted a campaign in Bolton, and as may be imagined, this was like going home to me, for when between eighteen and nineteen years of age I had a memorable time there. I met in this Mission many who well remembered my earliest appearances in the streets with the Salvation Army. During this Bolton campaign the general election was proceeding. Yet on the eve of the poll the Victoria Hall was crowded. We had about thirty glorious meetings here, but the outstanding events were the wonderful procession of ex-service men to the Cenotaph, which attracted a crowd of over 10,000 and the procession, headed by a bagpipe band in Scottish costume, in connection with the "public house sweep." At the Victoria Hall there was no organ, but we had a magnificent orchestra and choir, and the singing was something to be remembered. It was during this campaign that I went all the way to Bristol to speak at a great meeting at the Colston Hall and rushed back in time to continue my Bolton meetings on the following day. The first Labour Mayor of Bolton, a member of the Victoria Hall, took an active interest in the mission.

One of the most striking incidents here was the scene at the young people's meeting—again a thousand decided for Christ, and for the first time there were actually queues to the enquiry rooms.

When I was making one of my appeals, a dear lady sitting in the area said to a neighbour, "Please tell me what he wants? I am a little deaf and I didn't quite understand. I am the wife of a clergyman you see, and I don't know what he wants us to do, but *whatever it is I want to do it.*"

When I got home from a meeting I was told a group of men wanted to see me. One said, "A long time ago, sir, before your time, there was a young Gipsy who came to sing in Bolton at the Temple Opera House, and my word, he could sing like a lark! He used to sing, 'Will you meet me at the Fountain?' " I said, "I remember that too." "What!" cried the man, "Were you there?" "I suppose so," I said, "for I was the singer."

After Bolton came Newcastle. Here again I was on familiar ground. It was here that my boy Albany was born, when I was not yet twenty-one, at a little house in Westgate Terrace. At that time I was preaching at the old Hall of Varieties, and the Rev. Thomas Champness came to the theatre to christen little Albany and dedicate him to the service of Christ. To-day, Albany is engaged in the work of evangelism in America, and is leading thousands to the Saviour. Newcastle is rich in evangelical traditions. It has been one of its mightiest assets that those who have moulded its policy have been friends of all evangelistic enterprises. The city owes more than it can ever pay to Sir William Stephenson and Mr. T. H. Bainbridge. They were both lovers of the evangelical Gospel, and through their joint efforts the Newcastle Mission was started. Mr. Bainbridge was in touch with the leading evangelists of the world, and it was through his influence that Dr. D. L. Moody and Mr. Sankey first visited this country. When I first went to Newcastle the late Mr. Thomas Bainbridge stood by me. He was my friend up to the time of his death, and so was Sir William Stephenson. I have been the honoured guest of both. I remember well the first time I went into Brunswick Chapel. I crept into a corner of the gallery to listen to that wonderful old saint, Alexander McAulay,

who was conducting a Holiness Convention. Somehow he found out I was there, and got me on my feet. He saw possibilities in little things.

Our meetings at Newcastle were held in this famous old Brunswick Chapel, with the exception of the crowded Sunday meetings at the Palace Theatre. One of the most striking gatherings was a Saturday night testimony meeting, following on a street procession. Dr. Wardle Stafford voiced the feeling in all hearts when he added that already the mission had been a great blessing. "We rejoice," he said, "not only over the number of enquirers, but because we ourselves have been quickened by the Gipsy's powerful and gracious words." Other ministers added their testimony. So many in the congregation were eager to give their experience that as many as four rose and began at once. In between each, I started an appropriate chorus. The old chapel rang with cries of praise. "Jesus picked me off the scrap heap," said one man. "I was arrested in the middle of a discourse of a converted preacher," said another. A man who was bubbling over with happiness quietly rose and said, "On Wednesday night last I was converted under Gipsy Smith. I wandered into the enquiry room, and found Christ. I had not heard from or seen my mother for years, and did not know if she was alive. I wrote to a sister, and saw her to-day, and I have written to my mother. I am gloriously happy. My wife and my children know the difference."

There were some striking incidents in the enquiry rooms. Several members of the Anglican Church came for reconsecration. One man said, "I have been a professing Christian for years, but nobody ever put the thing to me properly, and now I want the kind of religion that

man has been talking about to-night." At one of the evening meetings the first man to rise said as he left the enquiry room, "I am now going home to write to my mother. I have not spoken to her for two years." Another man said, "Gipsy, what do you think you have done? I have taken my mother into my arms to-night for the first time for seven years! There has been a grand scene in our house, I can tell you!"

Once again we had a great procession to the Cenotaph from the ex-service men's meeting, and there was a wonderful response at the young people's meeting. My old friend Sir George Lunn came to many of the meetings, and we recalled how in the old days we used to kneel together at the early morning prayer meetings at the Hall of Varieties.

A brief mission in London followed, the centre here being Kingsway Hall. An extraordinary number of meetings was crowded into ten days. The Rev. J. E. Rattenbury, who conducted overflow services at the Aldwych Theatre on the two Sunday evenings, said in all his experience he had never seen such crowds flocking to the neighbourhood. Each Sunday, 10,000 people tried to get into Kingsway Hall, and the help of the police in marshalling the eager crowds was gladly accepted. Mr. Rattenbury said he had long wished that Gipsy Smith might conduct a mission of this character at Kingsway. As one who had known the Gipsy for thirty-five years, he said he thanked God for the great work he had done. "Never," added Mr. Rattenbury, emphatically, "have I known such a manifestation of power as we have seen in these few days."

In this mission nothing was more remarkable than the procession to the Cenotaph. More than 3,000 people

formed fours and marched to Whitehall. The silent throng extended practically the whole length of the Strand. In Whitehall, in the dusk and fog of this winter evening, the scene was unprecedented, even though there have been many processions to the nation's shrine. I deposited the wreath, and offered prayer, and we sang, "Abide with Me," the crowd getting larger every minute.

There was another scene in this splendid campaign for Christ in London which will long remain in one's memory. *The Methodist Recorder* described it as follows: "Picture Drury Lane, late on Thursday night; a big, brilliantly lighted public house, near the famous theatre; a great crowd of careless, laughing, chaffing, quarrelling, jostling Londoners; another crowd of sober, serious hymn-singing Christian folk in well ordered formation behind a brass band; and in the front, opposite the doors of the beer-house, a beaming gipsy boy, taking off his hat to pray. It was a great moment. Seeing the big crowd that had collected at this gay corner, seeing the men and women streaming from public houses and theatres, what could we do but call a halt and call on God to bless and to save—and 'compel them to come in'? What a tender, loving prayer! How clearly it could be heard. How silent did the noisy revellers become. When I think of the sights we saw as we marched through Great Queen Street, Betterton Street, Short's Gardens, Drury Lane, Bow Street, Covent Garden; when I think of the Gipsy, in the light of the torches, praying, with a shining face, one of the most beautiful and touching prayers I ever heard, in the midst of all this glitter and glare, and pleasure hunting, and vice, and devilry . . . I can only leave you to use your imagination in filling in the detail."

There were remarkable scenes at Kingsway Hall at

the close of this mission. At the last meeting it was estimated that 5,000 people were crowded into the building, hundreds standing out in the spacious lobbies where they could hear, if they could not see the speaker. Mr. Walter Runciman, who presided, said, "Gipsy Smith has filled this building as no politician, however great, has ever done. It is a remarkable fact that while he has actually been moving London the newspapers have scarcely spared him an inch of their space. If he had been a mere politician they would have had many leading articles and reports, yet he has gone deeper and climbed higher than any public man."

On a Sunday night, for the first time, I gave an address to—someone claimed—a million people, whom I would not see at all! There is a gifted family who have been my friends for many years. One of the boys in that family, whom I led to Christ, is now connected with the British Broadcasting Company. Thus it came about that after my usual Sunday services I went to Marconi House, in order to talk to "listeners in" all over the country, and also at places as far away as the Shetland Isles, Paris, Copenhagen, and even Madrid. I was very tired indeed, my voice having been greatly strained during the day, and I missed the inspiration of the faces of my hearers, but up in that silent little studio I gave to the mysterious apparatus to which I addressed my little sermon, that which I thought might help men and women who had probably not been to church for years. Afterwards from the most unlikely places I received letters telling me that the word had not been spoken in vain.

I think the most remarkable of these winter campaigns, in many ways, was the one held at Plymouth. Here practically all the Free Churches united, and the meetings

were held in the huge Drill Hall which seated over 4,000 people. The enthusiasm from beginning to end was simply wonderful. I think I may say without exaggeration that the rain fell for fourteen days without a break, and there were times when the deluge was such that the droppings fell from the roof of the hall (which was something like a field with a stone floor and a roof on) upon the heads of the audience. In one meeting amusement was created by a lady who calmly put up her umbrella. Yet even on the most inclement night the rather draughty hall was crowded, and more than once crowds had to be turned away. One feature of the meeting was the inspiring singing, which equalled anything heard in Lancashire or Yorkshire. A great choir was conducted by Mr. T. Lean, of Saltash, and became so popular that many times the audience refused to go home and stayed long after the close of the meeting, clamouring for more singing. Nowhere during the winter had I a choir which more effectively hummed, with orchestral effect, the refrains of tuneful gospel songs.

Once again I was on familiar ground. Here at Plymouth when I was about nineteen I used to speak in the old St. James's Hall, the Mount Street Hall (now Ker St. Wesleyan Sunday School), and the Mechanics' Institute, Devonport. I met a large number of people who were converted during my earliest ministry, and also during a mission I conducted at the Guildhall in 1900.

At the first meeting, at which I had a civic welcome, the Rev. W. Treffry, ex-President of the United Methodist Church, said that thirty-seven years before he had been secretary of a mission conducted by Gipsy Smith down in the West of Cornwall. "I had just commenced my ministry," said Mr. Treffry. "Perhaps the Gipsy

doesn't know it, but during that fortnight he gave me visions and he showed me ideals that fashioned all my life for me."

At the ex-service men's meeting I asked who would come with me to deposit at the War Memorial the beautiful emblem which, bearing a suitable inscription, stood on a chair behind me. As in other centres there came the answer, "All of us." In a few minutes a procession headed by the Salvation Army Band was on its way to the Hoe. On the huge promenade there were already thousands of people walking in the sunshine. On the plateau, in the sight and hearing of thousands on the surrounding slopes, I conducted a service. Facing the sea, lit up by a glorious golden sunset, I offered prayer, and "When I Survey" and "Rock of Ages" were sung. This open air gathering must have included some 9,000 or 10,000 spectators.

At a Sunday night service I had with me my daughter, Zillah, and as she brought my grandson, little Rodney, we had three generations on the platform. When I made my appeal, the dear little lad said, "Mother, I want to decide for Jesus," and went to the enquiry room.

There was a very remarkable scene at a great temperance demonstration here. I asked, "Can you go to the Great White Throne and say, 'Blessed Jesus, I honestly believe I could help to save Plymouth and the poor drunkards and harlots if I took a little drop, so I went on taking it?' " I read out one of the pledge cards, and asked who would stand up to signify a wish to sign. There were over 5,000 people present. At least 4,000 of them sprung to their feet. What were we to do? There were only about 2,000 pledge cards, specially printed and bearing my photograph. These were given out in a minute

or two and were signed, the chairman, Mr. G. P. Dymond, a life-long teetotaller, leading. Still, many hundreds stood. A pile of handbills was brought from the steward's office, and names and addresses were written on these, the whole being collected in baskets and brought to the platform. Afterwards I asked how many had signed for the first time, and a forest of hands went up. The total number of pledges signed was 1,400.

The *Western Morning News* remarked, "The immense accommodation of the Drill Hall has many times been taxed for functions, social, political, and religious, but it is doubtful whether at any time its confines have formed the stage for more remarkable and amazing scenes than those which have marked the campaign of the magnetic evangelist."

One day, by the way, a local journalist came to interview me, and in the course of conversation said, "You know you did something once for a college chum of mine away in Edinburgh." He mentioned the year, and it came home to me at once. I said, "You mean——," and he said, "Yes." That reminded me of one of the most wonderful cases I ever had in my ministry. I was preaching in Edinburgh, working side by side with the Rev. George Jackson. Mrs. Jackson came at the close of one of the services and said, "Gipsy, there is a young woman in the enquiry room who is in a desperate state, and she keeps crying out that she must see you." I went, and found the poor girl lying full length on the floor. I never saw anyone in such abject misery in all my life. I knelt beside her, and asked what was the trouble. "Oh," she said, "I have a great sin to confess." I said, "You had better tell it not to me but to Jesus." She said, "Oh, sir, I am the woman in the —— case. I have sworn falsely

against Mr. —— (a brilliant M. A. and an international golfer, who, after fighting the case up to the highest court, had been branded, disgraced and dismissed from society).” The poor girl kept crying, “How can I find peace? They will send me to gaol.” I told her that she must publicly confess, and it would be better to go to gaol than to keep silent. She went to the legal authorities and told the truth, saying, “I make this statement, first of all because Jesus has saved me, and, secondly, I want to do justice to an innocent man.” Three months afterwards I was outside a shop in St. Paul’s Churchyard, when a barrister from Scotland came up. “Are you Gipsy Smith?” he said. “Yes, sir.” Well, sir,” he said, “I was in court when that girl —— made her confession. There was not a dry eye in the court at that time, and it did more to make men of my class believe in the Gospel of Jesus Christ than all the sermons we have heard in a quarter of a century.”

A month later I was in Glasgow, and at the close of a great service the door of the vestry opened and in walked a tall, handsome fellow. He turned the key in the lock. He was a bigger man than I, so I pulled myself together and prepared for emergencies. But he threw his manly arms around me and said, “I am ——, and you delivered me!” I am not ashamed to say my tears mingled with his. Next night his mother and father were in that room with me, and I don’t know which kissed me most—the father, the mother, or the boy. The girl found the right man and became a happy wife. The brilliant man who had been wronged was reinstated.

There were some great scenes at the farewell meeting at Plymouth. The choir conductor presented a lovely bouquet to my daughter. It was very beautiful to hear

Zillah say in reply: "I shall never forget Plymouth, for here the Lord has answered my prayers for my little son, and when there is another mission like this I shall hope to bring my little daughter." To my surprise, I received a handsome clock, inscribed: "Gipsy Smith, M. B. E., with grateful love from his Mission Choir of Seven Hundred—Plymouth, 1923." Ten days after the mission closed, and on a cold wet night, the great chapel was filled with those who had been enquirers and had signed decision cards. There were batches of converts who had come from as far away as Princetown, and the great majority were young men and women—a fact full of significance for the future of religion in this district.

## CHAPTER VIII

COVERING FAMILIAR GROUND.—GLASGOW.—HAN-  
LEY.—SOME NOTABLE SCENES.—EFFECTS OF THE  
CAMPAIGN.

FROM Plymouth I went north to Glasgow, where a three weeks' campaign was organised by the United Evangelistic Association. This excellent association was formed in 1874, for the purpose of uniting the churches. In my mission the churches co-operating included the Church of Scotland, the United Free, the Congregational, the Wesleyan Methodists, Primitive Methodists, and Baptists.

For the first week I occupied the pulpit at the influential Presbyterian Church at Westbourne Gardens, Kelvinside. I confess that I had my doubts about conducting a mission in a fashionable West End Church, where I understood no similar enterprise had ever been planned before; but at the end of my stay I wished it were possible to remain for another month in such a splendid strategic centre. One of the outstanding features of this effort was the way in which influential people supported me. They came to the meetings in their cars, and on one Sunday evening the wife of the Lord Provost of Glasgow was amongst those who had to be turned away. At St. George's Parish Church, in the heart of the city, we had many fine meetings for business men. A local paper describing the daily scene, said: "The audience consists mostly of middle-aged men with iron grey hair, keen eyes,

and the alert carriage which attains prosperity merely as the jumping-off place for greater prosperity. They are the quick-lunch, decide-now gentlemen, so eager to see who has preceded them to the meeting that they mostly forget to take off their hats before they have progressed well up the aisle."

Many of the most prominent ministers in Glasgow, nearly all Doctors of Divinity, assisted me in these services. The special meeting for ministers was, I think, the best I had ever addressed. About six hundred invitations were sent out, and at least four hundred responded.

At another gathering the directors of the United Evangelistic Association, directorate representatives from church presbyteries and councils, and ministers and laymen who were helping in the campaign, were invited to meet me at the Christian Institute. Lord Maclay, who presided, remarked that he had never come into touch with the Gipsy until now, but he was most happy to meet one of whose reputation he had so often heard. He believed it was three years since the Association first had it in their minds to invite him to Glasgow. He believed an impression had been made during this visit that would last for all time, especially in the West End. My friend and host, the Rev. Hubert Simpson, who followed, said, "I think I have known most of the great evangelists who have come to Scotland in the last 35 years. I had the pleasure of seeing Drummond, Moody, and General Booth in my father's home. I say here what I have said to the Gipsy: For about thirty years I have been looking for the man who was in the real succession to Moody and Drummond, and I think I have at last found one who is worthy to wear the mantle."

We had some great meetings in the City Hall and in

St. Andrews' Hall, overflow meetings being held in neighbouring churches. It was good to hear the Scots people singing, to the Covenanters' tune. "The Lord's My Shepherd" as only they can sing it. The enthusiasm grew daily, and on the last night, when I attended a dinner given in my honour by Lord Maclay, addressed two crowded meetings, rushed off to send a message far and wide from the new Glasgow Broadcasting Station, and then caught the night train for home, there were some unforgettable scenes. On all hands I was pressed to return, and God willing, I hope in due course to be able to accept the invitation.

This winter's work was crowned by a mission at Hanley. It is impossible to describe the feelings that came over me when once more I came back to the Potteries and received a civil welcome at the Town Hall. It was a real homecoming. There are no people anywhere in the world whom I love more than my Hanley people.

It may be remembered that at the end of 1881 General Booth wanted to give me a new sphere of work. I said, "Send me to the nearest place to the bottomless pit." On the last day of the year I got to Stoke station with my wife and one child, Albany, the latter just a year old. When we made our way on the loop-line to Hanley, and saw the pit-fires, and smelt the sulphur of the iron-foundries, and saw the smoke from the potteries, I said, "I do believe we're getting to the place itself!" We had great difficulty in getting lodgings. Everywhere where we asked they seemed to fight shy of the Army. At last a poor old Welsh body took compassion on us and took us in.

I began my work, it may be remembered, in the old Batty Circus, a cold draughty place—the most uncom-

fortable meeting place I was ever in in my life. The ring, which we made a pulpit, was full of dirt and sawdust. At the first meeting a mere handful of curious folk sat on the raised seats, looking like jam-pots on shelves. I found them singing "I Need Thee," and thought to myself, "They certainly look as if they needed somebody!" When I first went into the market-place, and I played the little concertina presented to me at Devonport—not a soul came to support us. After a while some people, thinking we were labourers out of work, threw pennies. We went on holding meetings in the dismal circus, the audiences being small. Mrs. Smith used to hold a candle while some of us did what we could to make the leaky place more habitable. At last the tide turned. The Fry family, a father and three sons, who were capable musicians, came as a special attraction. The Mayor of Burslem (Alderman Boulton) came to preside, and made a speech which helped us tremendously. Gradually the crowds increased until we had wonderful results.

It was at Hanley that I left the Salvation Army. I rarely mention this old story now, but the facts were very simple. After I had been in Hanley six months the General wanted me for another sphere of labour. A body of lady supporters in the town pleaded that, for Annie's sake, her health then being rather poor, I should be allowed to stay. The leaders of the Free Churches arranged for the presentation of a gold watch. How this was given, how (a few hours after my second baby was born) a letter arrived indicating my dismissal for defiance of the regulations of the Army, how I urged that I had every right to receive such a token from outside friends, how the people demonstrated their sympathy—all that, as I say, is an old story, and all I have to add is, God bless the Sal-

vation Army! I have never ceased to admire and commend and pray for that wonderful organisation whose founder I loved so well. Though I left their ranks, in many a mission right up to the present day Salvationists have worked side by side with me. Never in my meetings do I arouse a bigger cheer than when I speak of the Army's example in going out to seek and save the lost.

It was at Hanley that, in spite of the fact that I had nine services a week, and an open air meeting before each, I set myself to serious study. Only the other day I went to the little house in St. John Street and stood in that little den in which I used to pore over my Bible, my dictionary, and the few other books which laid the foundation of all the work that followed.

It need hardly be added that during the recent mission I met a host of old friends, including many who were converted in the days of my earliest ministry. The crowds that gathered in the magnificent Victoria Hall were very demonstrative. We had a wonderful young people's meeting, at which over 600 decision cards were signed. Each week over 1,000 adults decided for Christ. Two crowded meetings for ex-service men were held, and there was a magnificent temperance demonstration. My son Hanley came to assist me in two of the meetings.

Perhaps the most remarkable scene was that in the market-place one Sunday evening. I asked the congregation at the Victoria Hall on the Sunday night if they would care to come with me to the spot where I first stood and proclaimed the Gospel forty-two years before. They cried, "Yes!" with a cheer, and went in a body. When I got to the old familiar place and mounted a chair I looked upon a wonderful crowd. I was standing only a yard or two from the very spot where I first stood and played my

little concertina. I said to the crowd what I say now. I owe much to Hanley. I love Hanley. It is always home to me. I thank God for every remembrance of the thousands there who have been and are my spiritual children.

During this campaign I addressed nearly 300 meetings, and probably spoke to 500,000 people, though it would be difficult to give any reliable figure, several open air crowds and overflow meetings having to be added, while the number to whom I preached twice when broadcasting no one could estimate. The strain at times was exceptional for I had no "party" as I had had in America and was my own soloist. During the campaign I sang at nearly all the evening services and my accompanists included some of the most resourceful organists in the country.

A feature of the winter campaign which should be mentioned was the popularity of the song "Wonderful Jesus." In every mission it struck the keynote at the beginning and was the final note of praise. Audiences everywhere clamoured for it, and it may be described as the song of the 1922-3 revival. Thousands of converts are still singing:

"Wonderful, wonderful Jesus,  
In the heart He implanteth a song,  
A song of deliverance, of courage, of strength,  
In the heart He implanteth a song."

I was delighted everywhere to see how quickly audiences picked up the fine old tune to, "Arise My Soul, Arise," of which I have always been very fond.

It is interesting to note that at Newcastle for the first time I heard the old Primitive Methodist tune "Job" to

"When I Survey." I have never heard any congregations sing it as they do on Tyneside.

At Glasgow several times I got my audiences to sing "The Lord's My Shepherd" to the old Covenanters' tune, and, of course, that suited the Scottish folk down to the ground. At Hanley the audiences much enjoyed the novelty of a ministerial choir. I was always well supported by local ministers, and when I suddenly called upon fifteen of them to sing a chorus by themselves the response was delightful.

At the young people's meetings I usually sing that truly "striking" refrain:

"Will your heart ring true?  
Are you loyal through and through?  
When the clapper strikes the gong—  
Strikes the gong—  
Will your heart ring true?"

This has been immensely popular.

A Methodist preacher has left it on record that he alone knew of two hundred people who received the witness of the Spirit and the joy of sins forgiven while singing this verse:

"My God is reconciled,  
His pardoning voice I hear  
He owns me for His child—  
I can no longer fear;  
With confidence I now draw nigh,  
And 'Father, Abba Father!' cry."

The singing of it in my recent campaigns has been something to remember. I may add that in every one of

these missions the Rev. F. Luke Wiseman gave much valued assistance, not only in the work of organisation but by his addresses. At several centres I was assisted by my fellow townsman, the Rev. Dr. Maldwyn Hughes, and on one memorable occasion by my friend the Rev. Harry Bisseker, the head of the Leys School. In London I had "teamed" with me Dr. T. R. Glover, the public orator of the University of Cambridge and the author of "The Jesus of History," who gave a series of addresses to students. Thus ample illustration was afforded of the fact that the highest culture may be united with the most fervent evangelism.

During the campaign I had no press or publicity agent, no staff of any kind; but I have been fortunate in counting many journalists among my personal friends, and most gratefully I acknowledge the help I received from the press. In most cities the local papers devoted considerable space to the missions. I owe a good deal to the kindly help of religious weeklies like *The British Weekly*, *The Christian World*, *The Life of Faith*, *The Sunday School Chronicle*, and *The Christian Herald*, and especially our Methodist papers, *The Times*, *The Recorder* and *The Joyful News*. I do not know that there has been anything in the history of religious journalism quite like the long series of descriptive articles containing some 250,000 words by a sympathetic journalist, Mr. H. Murray, which appeared week by week throughout the winter in the columns of *The Methodist Recorder*. I mention these because I received letters from all parts of the world stating that they had been the means of encouraging the revival spirit in all sorts of out-of-the-way places. Missionaries on furlough told me that they had read the accounts of the missions on the field. A Swedish

pastor translated a large portion of them into Swedish. I think it is not too much to say that more than one person far beyond the reach of my voice, and unable to attend similar meetings, was actually converted through the reading of these records of the campaign.

Speaking at the close of the tour the Rev. F. Luke Wiseman, secretary of the Home Mission Department of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, said: "The services have exceeded the most sanguine expectations of the most hopeful of us. I am not often accused of being a pessimist, and I had great hopes, but all my forecasts were surpassed by the results which were achieved. Of course, Gipsy Smith was splendidly backed by an army of workers, and for months previous to his visit prayer was offered and visitation carried out, but allowing for all that, it has been a remarkable exhibition of the undiminished attractiveness of the Gospel when it is proclaimed with simplicity and fervour. The results that have accrued have been astonishing. I do not pay very much attention to mere numbers. At the same time you cannot rob of its significance the statement that in the eight missions conducted by the Gipsy we know of over 23,000 men, women and young people who have publicly declared that they want to stand out on the Lord's side. I do not care whether you go North or South, East or West, you will hear stories of miraculous conversions that will match anything there has ever been in the glorious history of our church. Our churches are better fitted now than ever for the great work of evangelism by the very fact that there has been such conviction and enthusiasm among those who have been already under our Christian nurture. It is my privilege to minister in a good many churches during the year. The pulse of the church life

of Methodism is distinctly firmer and stronger and more buoyant than I have known it for many years now. The services are happier. The people are more ready for prayer. They are eager to hear. The number of 'itching ears' has grown less, and the number of men and women who ask, 'What is the word of God to me to-day?' has greatly increased. The Church is quickened in its spiritual life and has recovered tone."

In the course of a leading article *The Recorder* said: "Judged by any standard—numbers attending, spiritual enthusiasm, pulpit powers, numbers of enquirers, effect upon the locality—these services have achieved signal success. In each place visited the largest available auditorium was taken and filled night after night with serious hearers. The great gatherings have been orderly, fervent, responsive. Altogether it is computed that upwards of 23,000 persons have given in their names as enquirers. Remarkable as are these results, we are inclined to attach more significance to other consequences. The churches have been quickened, the Christian teachers and workers have been greatly encouraged as they have witnessed the manifest power still attending the preaching of the Gospel of salvation, and the general community has been awakened to concern and hope. To borrow the imagery of one of the Gipsy's solos, the services have struck a sonorous gong, and with Abt Vogler the people have 'heard and considered and bowed the head.' "

## CHAPTER IX

WANTED: GODLY MOTHERS.—SOME PATHETIC  
STORIES.—AND SOME GLEAMS OF SUNSHINE.

SOMETIMES I am asked what England needs most now. I answer at once in two words: Godly mothers. Too many women think more of hats and furs and trinkets than of the soul of the child God put in their arms, which is going to live for evermore. They think more of a night's entertainment than they do of a child's destiny.

I have been trying to think it out all my life, and it is a positive mystery to me how any true woman can refuse to give her heart to Christ. Even if a man is unconverted he has time because his wife is a Christian. If we are going to fight the devil we shall have to fight him with a cradle. The other day I had a chat with a sweet woman whose baby I kissed. "I have none of my own," she said, "so I adopted this, and when he's four he shall have a little baby sister, for I'll adopt another!" Is there not more religion in that than in nursing a poodle?

I was once talking to a well-known merchant prince, a leading Methodist, and he said to me, "Do you know when I want to engage a boy for my office I always ask first to see his mother. If I am impressed by the mother I can be pretty sure that the boy will be all right."

One of the late Rev. Charles Garrett's lay missionaries told me this story. He had charge of a Boys' Home in connection with the Liverpool Mission. One day a shoe-

black came in with his box over his shoulder, whistling, and as bright and happy as if somebody had left him a fortune. "Have you had a good day?" he was asked. "No, sir, better than that." "Somebody given you a shilling?" "No, sir, better than that." "Why, whatever makes you so cheerful?" "Oh," said the boy, "*my mother died to-day, sir, and now I shall have a chance.* You see, I've never seen her sober."

I think of a women's conference where the question was discussed at length: "At what age in a child's life is it safe to urge immediate decision for Christ?" There was a lull in the debate. A dear old grannie with silver curls hanging on each side of her face, said quietly, "Sisters, I will tell you when I began with my first-born. I began with him twenty years before he was born by coming myself to Christ."

I believe a woman's first place is in her home. A woman said to me, "I am the mother of twelve children, and the Lord has revealed it to me that I am to preach the Gospel!"

I replied, "You ought to be the happiest woman in the world, then, because the Lord has revealed it to you that you are to preach the Gospel, and if you have twelve children He has provided you with a congregation!" Though I lost my own beloved mother when I was six, I have never ceased to thank God that I was saved before I had contracted a bad habit. I have seen marvellous conversions of grey-headed people, but if you ask me which I would sooner have, the conversion of a thousand drunken men from public-houses or a thousand young folk, I answer unhesitatingly, I will have the latter.

At a lovefeast in Manchester I listened to a murderer, a burglar, a prizefighter, a coiner, a drunkard, and others,

most of whom had been years in gaol. They told how they were saved. I got up and said, "Men, God did wonders for you, but more still for me, for He saved me before I got there!"

I love children. There is nothing I am more proud of than the fact that so many of them have loved me. In many a home in which I was a guest little ones with whom I played have formed friendships which have never been broken. Time after time they have clambered on to my knee and lisped, "Tell me about the Gipsies." There is a picture of a different kind, however, which is ineffacably engraved on my heart. It is that of a little Scottish girlie in Aberdeen. I was staying there once with Mr. Grey Fraser, one of the saints of the earth. I went with Mr. and Mrs. Fraser to the meeting at the Music Hall. We could only get through the crowd with the help of two stalwart policemen. I felt someone pulling at my coat-tail. I thought it was someone trying to get in by hanging on to me. A policeman said, "You might stop a minute, sir." I looked round, and there was a wee lassie without a hat or shoes, wearing an old umbrella round her shoulders, her hair covered with snow. She thrust out a little hand and said, "Please, sir, I've brought you some sweeties." I asked, "Why?" and she said, "We have a new daddy at our house. He has not been sober as long as I can remember, but last night he came home a new daddy, and says he won't get drunk again, so please take my sweeties."

When in Hanley recently I heard a beautiful thing. A father was reading aloud to his little girl the articles on my campaign which appeared week by week in *The Methodist Recorder*. The little one said, "Daddy, I do wish April would come!" "Why dear?" he asked. "Because,"

she said, "When Gipsy Smith comes to Hanley I want to be converted." That dear little girl gave her heart to Jesus in the enquiry room on the second night of the mission.

I think also of one other little girl at one of my meetings who said, "Mother, where are the people going?" "They are going to seek Jesus," was the reply. "Then," said the little one, "why don't we all go?" I remember once talking with a preacher in Scotland. "Brother Smith," he said, "I could not get to the meeting last night. How did you get on?" I told him a certain number had been converted. "Oh," said he, "but, is it safe to count them?" I said, "They counted them on the Day of Pentecost, and put the number down at 3,000." Later on another subject came up, and he asked, "Gipsy, are you married?" I said "Yes." He said, "Have you any children?" I said, "Yes." "How many?" he asked. "Oh," said I, "do you think it is safe to count them?"

We count our babies, and the Lord counts His, and He says there is joy in counting. And here I ought to say that nothing fills my heart with joy more than the fact that I led my own children, at an early age, to Christ. My son Albany, born at Newcastle, is now an evangelist in America, and is bringing thousands to the feet of the Saviour. My son Alfred Hanley, born at Hanley, is a minister of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, whose devoted work is very well known in the Midlands and in Yorkshire. My daughter Zillah has assisted me in many of my meetings. In my South African Mission she was of great assistance, and I am sure she will be remembered in the lives of many young people to whom she spoke and sang during that great tour. With her husband, Mr. James Lean, of Teignmouth, circuit steward and local

preacher in Wesleyan Methodist Church, she is constantly engaged in Christian service.

On my way to Plymouth recently I went to Teignmouth, to stay with my daughter and her husband. My little granddaughter, who will be three years old next March, was hanging round me all the morning. I could not get rid of her. She came to my bed long before it was daylight. Her mother told the maid, Violet, to take her up into a top room, so that she should not cry when I went. Baby heard my voice outside, and she cried out, "By-bye, g'anpa!" Then I suppose the maid told her what to say, for that tiny little voice from the top window added, "Dod b'ess you, g'anpa!" That little prayer has been music in my ears ever since.

When I was a little chap I had not many friends, and no one to mother me, and whenever I see Christ-like sisters caring for the little ones my heart is deeply moved. When I was at Manchester I used to go with Mr. Collier to children's meetings as often as I could, and I loved to see the Cripples' Guild and to go into the *crêche*. I loved the sharp-witted, bare-footed little fellows who sold matches in the streets. I am reminded of a story that Mr. Collier loved to tell. One day he was walking along Oxford Road, Manchester, a road where people love to strut in their new clothes (there is far too much of this sort of strutting—and you know when you buy a turkey you don't buy the strut or the gobble; and don't want either), a little urchin came along the road leading a donkey. He had no hat, his nether garments were well ventilated, and were suspended by a piece of string. He led that donkey along as proudly as if he was the owner of a Derby winner.

Two Oxford Road swells, one with a piece of glass

stuck in his eye, happened to be passing. The latter young man, stroking his upper lip—feeling for the substance of things hoped for and certainly the evidence of things not seen—cried loudly, “Hi, my boy, how much for your donkey?”

The little chap as quick as lightning replied, “Why? *Can your mother afford to keep two?*”

Once I stayed in a Lancashire home where there was an eight-year-old boy who was learning to play a brass whistle. Whenever he could get his fingers on it he tried to play the National Anthem. He even brought the instrument to the table with him, and fingered it between the courses. I saw he was fidgetting to get away, so I said to his mother, “Let him go.” As he gladly slipped away I said, “Sonny, you’re very fond of that whistle.”

“Eh,” he said, “and you ought to have one o’ these, Mr. Smith.”

“Why should I,” I asked.

“Because,” said the lad, “*you could accompany yourself when you sing!*”

I was concluding a mission in America, and hundreds of people pressed forward to say “Good-bye.” I adopted my usual plan of picking out one child or elderly person with whom I might shake hands, as representing the whole crowd. On this occasion I selected a dear old lady, aged about seventy, with silvery curls on each side of her face. When she seized my hand she cried, “Eh, my dear, *I can hug you with a relish!*”

Last Christmas I taught my little granddaughter, aged two years and nine months, to sing “Jesus loves me, this I know.” In a frivolous moment I thought I would teach her to sing a less sacred song: “She’s my sweetheart, I’m her Joe; She’s my Zillah, I’m her beau.” One morn-

ing at the breakfast table the little tot suddenly piped out loudly,

"She's my sweetheart, I'm her beau  
For the Bible tells me so!"

I shall never forget when the first little baby came to our house. I was a very young father. He was born before I was twenty-one, and I watched that baby, and I watched the mother, and I learned many things from both. It seemed as though I was forgotten for a while. Baby was mother's world, and the mother was baby's world. She watched him and loved him by day, and dreamed of him when she was asleep. She fondled him, caressed him, wooed him, and the weeks and months passed rapidly, and long before I expected it, and yet I longed for it, wooed by the mother heart, the baby lisped "Dada, daddy!" Listen, listen, just like that, God's great nursing mother of the skies, the Holy Spirit, comes down into the newly surrendered trusting heart, and teaches it to say, "Abba, Father." That is the new birth.

I often had to take my children with me on my journeys. I used to take them in turn to teach them that they had a father, because my life was spent away so much. When God gives out the laurels they will get their share. Never once have my children or my wife put a straw in my way to hinder me. They have never said, "You can't go." For all they have lost, some day God will make it up to them.

I took my sweet little Zillah with me through a campaign, and asked her to sit with me in the pulpit. It was a great comfort just to hold her hand and know she was there.

One night when we were together at home she said, "Daddy, did you see that man?"

"Which man?" I asked.

"You know," she said, and I knew that she knew I knew, and I said, "Yes, I have seen him."

She was referring to one of the stewards who served in a centre aisle, and whose section filled up last every night. His face was enough to keep people off. It was enough to make an undertaker weep. It reminded me of the hind wheel of a hearse. Children know sunshine and know storm.

"Daddy," said Zillah, "is he like Jesus?"

"No, dearie," I was forced to say, "Jesus would not look like that man."

"If Jesus looked like him, daddy, I would run away," she said.

She put her arms around my neck, and added: "Daddy, if Jesus is like somebody I know I shall just put my arms around him and kiss him." And I went and shut myself alone that I might get on my face and ask Him if my religion commended itself to a little child.

When I was conducting a mission at Edinburgh in 1895 I stayed for a time with the Rev. Thomas Crerar, whose wife was the sister of Professor Henry Drummond. Their little baby girl called me Gippo, and when she wanted sugar would order me to produce "lulu." Some time after I had left the little one was shown a photograph of myself and she clapped her little hands and shouted, "Gippo! lulu!"

One of the most beautiful and touching stories I ever heard was told to me by a distinguished doctor of divinity, whose name was well known on both sides of the Atlantic. One morning a wealthy American citizen called the min-

ister and said he had heard a wonderful sermon on the question of repentance and restitution, and it had gone right home to his heart and conscience. Years before he had wronged a woman. She had died. There were two children, two of those poor little things, God help them! who came into the world without a name. This man now heard the voice of God telling him that he must find the innocent children, and do what he could to make reparation for the wrong committed.

It appeared that the little ones had been placed in a home for foundlings. At first the minister was inclined to suggest that that arrangement need not be disturbed, but the man said, No, he must see them and put matters right. Inquiries were made privately. It was found that one of the children had died. The other, a bright little boy, was still in the Home.

God pity the child that comes into the world through the wrong door. I cannot think that Jesus can turn His back on a little child that never asked to be born.

The church that He must find anchorage in must throw her doors wide open to the poor sinful man and woman and the children, and say to them all, "In the name of God, come. We will be a friend to you. This is the place of refuge for the poor and the sinful."

The little boy was taken from the Home, where he was going out into the fields and learning to farm, and they brought him to the city to the magnificent apartment of the father.

"I shall never forget that home-coming of that child," said the preacher who told me the story. "I had to be there—for that rich man couldn't trust himself to be there alone when the child came. He took that little fellow

in his great arms and hugged him close and said, 'My boy, would you like to see your father?' "

The little fellow answered, "I don't know."

"Could you love your father if you saw him, although he had done you and your sister and your mother a great wrong? Do you think if you saw him you could forgive him?"

The little starved soul within that little body could only say, "I don't know."

"I don't know," was the only answer the boy could make.

Then the rich man pressed the child close up to him and put the baby arms around his neck and said, "My child, I am your father." And turning to the preacher he said, "Doctor, I have found Christ, in finding my child."

When I went to live in Manchester I made a visit to a home for orphans and destitute children. There were several hundred poor little boys in that institution. The Home was superintended by a grave old man who had been in charge for many years. He took me through the Home, and I talked with the boys a little.

The Superintendent of the Home told me the story of a little fellow who came to the Home with no relatives in the world. His mother, who had died, was the only friend he had ever known. She had kept a little room for them with her needle and thread—and then, one day, the thread broke, and the little boy was brought to the Home. "We stripped him of his rags and gave him a bath and clean clothes," said the Superintendent. "I turned to my desk for some article, and when I saw him again he was weeping as if his heart would break. He was searching through his rags, and at last brought forth his dirty cap, from which he carefully began to tear out

the lining, so as not to destroy it. The tears were streaming down his cheeks. 'What is the matter, my boy?' I asked. 'My mother made this cap,' he sobbed, 'and she didn't have enough material to make the lining, so she cut this piece from her dress. It is all I have to remember her by, and I want to keep it.' Many a man longs to have his mother's religion. The robe she wore may be his if he will only come to her God and her Saviour.

I once heard my distinguished townsman, the late Sir German Sims Woodhead, say that many a child born in England was forty years old when it was born. I happened to mention this in the presence of the great Christian surgeon, the late Sir Alfred Pearce Gould. "Why," he said, "do you not know that many children are drunk *before* they are born?"

How anyone can think of facts like these without being stirred to indignation and moved to support some Christ-like crusade "for the least of these" passes my comprehension.

## CHAPTER X

MY AMAZING YEARS WITH "THE BOYS."—"MIX-  
ING JESUS WITH THE COFFEE."—UNCONVEN-  
TIONAL SERVICE.—THE SPIRIT THAT WON  
THE WAR.

OF the making of books on the Great War there is no end. I know many are weary of reading them, but in response to countless requests I feel bound to say something about my experiences during those amazing years. There is so much to tell that I scarcely know where to begin. Perhaps it may be of greater interest to the reader if, instead of giving a dull, detailed diary with dates, and so on, I give a general idea of the kind of work I was privileged to do during three and a half years—the most memorable period in all my ministry.

When in 1914 I saw the cream of the manhood of my country flocking to the colours, coming from all parts of the British Empire, at the call of need, I said, "That is the place for me—where the cream is!" I have hated war all my life; I have preached against it, and have prayed, "Oh, God, scatter those who delight in war." I felt, however, if there was ever a righteous cause in which a man who loves his God and who loved his country, and who loves his family, might take up the sword, it was this cause.

I tried to enlist. I was turned down. I was suffering

from an incurable disease, and the doctors could not help me. I was born too soon.

If I could put my clock back a quarter of a century, I would do it, that I might have another twenty-five years in which to live and preach my Lord. I could not get in as a soldier because there was an age limit, though before the war was over every man up to the age of fifty-five was in khaki in this country, and every third male in the Empire, no matter what his age, was in khaki or blue. The only males at home were the old men and boys. I think if I had been an ordained minister, I should have been taken as a chaplain, but I am only a layman. I went to my church and said, "Please send me to the boys, will you? You know what I am. You know what I can do. You know what I can't do. But I will do the best I can. I will carry their kit; I will clean their shoes; if a boy falls, and I am anywhere near, I will kiss him for his mother; I will pray with him; I will love him. Let me go!"

My own church did not see fit to send me. Perhaps afterwards it wished it had, for presently I had the entrée to the whole of the British line. I was made a sort of travelling bishop, and I had the biggest field that any man had during the war.

The Y. M. C. A., however, accepted my services. Here I want to say once more that there is not one British boy who went to the front and who came back, but who thanks God every day for the Y. M. C. A.

I was soon in khaki, and soon in France. I did not know what to do when I got there. I was ready for anything. I never took a sermon with me that I had preached anywhere in the world. I did not consider it good enough, to begin with, and I was not sure that I would get a chance to preach much, but I was prepared to work, I

was prepared to serve, and I made up my mind that whatever I said to the boys should grow out of the need of the hour, that it should be warm from my heart. I made up my mind I would write my prescription after I had seen my patient; I would do my diagnosing first. So I took no manuscript with me. I made up my mind that the man in front of me should be my manuscript.

I never have had such a chance in my life. The first Y. M. C. A. hut I got into was in one of the big reinforcement camps. I spoke to the leader, who was a clergyman when he was at home, but out there, just a man, a Christian gentleman, who had left his ecclesiasticism behind him. I said to him, "Where are you weakest?" He said, "You see those two big urns?" "Yes," I said. He said, "They will be filled with boiling hot coffee and boiling hot tea, and the doors will be opened and for four solid hours boys will come in for it, and we want somebody to pour out coffee and tea."

I said, "I'm your man." And for four hours I poured out coffee and tea until my fingers and thumb were blistered. The boys knew me. I was no stranger. Some of them said, "Mr. Smith, we were brought up on you." One of them came to me and said, "I have heard you on four continents." Another boy said, "You know, we have your gramophone records at home, and your sermons too; my mother was converted under you. We are always talking about you. My mother is always giving us Gipsy Smith, and it seems as if I can't get rid of you in France!"

Besides pouring out, I soon found there was something else to do. I had to distribute chocolate, and malted milk, and bachelor's buttons, and soap and candles, and cigarettes, and shoe polish, and matches, and writing paper and envelopes. By the way, writing paper and envelopes

alone in the Y. M. C. A. hut of the British force cost, the last two years of the war, £100,000 a year. I believe it was one of the best investments the Y. M. C. A. made, because if they could keep the boys in touch with home, they did something. I always had a big pile, when I could get it, of writing paper, envelopes, and post-cards, and I distributed them myself; and sometimes I would say, "Boys, who has written home to-night, or this week, or within the last few days? All you boys that have, stand up." They were "sports," and the fellows who had written home within a week would stand up, and the fellows would sit down and look sheepish, and I would say, "If you don't come up here and get this writing paper, and write to your mother, or wife, or sweetheart to-night, I will put you in the guard-room." They came in single file to get their paper, and I always knew when a boy was writing to his mother or his sister or "the other one." If he was writing to his mother, he would look up and say, "One sheet, sir, please." If he was writing to his wife he would say, "One sheet, sir, or a post-card," and if he was writing to "the other one," he would come up with a twinkle in his eye and say, "Two sheets, sir, please." Sometimes my supply was a little low, and further supplies had not come, and I had to try to make it go around, and I would say, "Now, boys, one sheet each to-night." And when I would tell him that, he would come back in five minutes, when he thought I wouldn't recognise him, and say, "One sheet, sir, please." You can imagine that he got two sheets every time!

Now in France and in Flanders, during the war, when I was distributing tea and coffee to those boys who were wet to the skin, trembling with fever, shell-shocked, looking like hunted partridges, after standing in water to their

knees for a week, I felt I was doing Christ's service as much as I have been doing on any platform. I say that for the sake of the folks who think you are never doing any work for Christ unless you have a hymn book in one hand and a Bible in the other, and you are singing "Come to Jesus." There are people in the world—I'm glad I don't live with them—good people, but people whom I call "the Lord's awkward squad," with soul so small that if you put them in a nut-shell they would rattle.

I remember one of these. We were in a hut in France, a little way behind the line, as near as they would allow. In that hut there were 250 boys just from the trenches, wet through to the skin. They had just climbed out of the hell of the trenches. After they had been a few minutes in that warm room, their clothes were steaming on them. They were lined up two deep around that hut, waiting their turn for a hot cup of tea or coffee, not pushing, not jostling; the most unselfish crowd you ever saw in the world, were the boys in France and Flanders. The boys at the far end were awaiting their turn, and singing:

"What's the use of worrying,  
It never was worth while,  
So pack up your troubles in your old kit bag,  
And smile, smile, smile!"

One of those "awkward squadders" came up. He was a good man. I am not doubting his goodness, but he had, to put it bluntly, and to use a good old English word, no "gumption." He came up to the lady who was serving the boys with their coffee—a lady of title, who had left her home and given up her ease and her pleasure, her frivolous, butterfly life, to come out there and live for

the boys at her own expense. There was far more religion in that than just seeking to be flattered, petted, and living selfishly.

This fussy man said to her, "Sister, stop pouring out, stop pouring out!" She said, "What for?" He said, "Let's put in a word for Jesus." She said, "Look at these poor, hungry lads. Why, they are wet through to the skin. They are steaming with their misery. They have just come out of the hell of the trenches. For God's sake let me give them something hot as soon as I can." He said, "No, put a word in for Jesus." And a bright-faced Tommy standing there cried, "Governor, *she* puts Jesus in the coffee."

What a little sermon! Put Jesus in the coffee. Mix Him in your everyday life. Mix Him in the kitchen. Mix Him in the office, mix Him in the bank, mix Him when you have a social evening with your friends!

By the way, here is a story which I have often told at my meetings for ex-service men. Our gracious Queen Mary went to serve the boys in one of the huts in London when the leading women in England were doing that sort of work for the boys in France and Flanders, and all over the British Isles. And one day a Scotsman, returning from leave, had a few hours to wait in London, and went to one of these places. Queen Mary was serving behind the counter, and he went up to her and asked for some tea. She misunderstood him, because of his broad Scotch, and she gave him coffee. He took it down to one of the tables, and tasted his tea, as he thought it was. Then he took it back, and said, "Here, miss, what's the game? I asked you for tea. This is coffee." The lady said, "I am very sorry. You shall have tea." "Well," he said, "please don't forget when a soldier boy asks for

tea, he doesn't mean coffee," and he began to stir it up and taste it. Another soldier, one of the orderlies, went over to him. He said, "You bloomin' idiot, do you know who you've been talkin' to?" He said, "No, who is it?" He said, "That is Queen Mary." He said, "No." And the orderly said, "It is Queen Mary."

The Scotsman got up from the table, went back to the counter and said, "*Are* you Queen?" She said, "I think so." "Oh," he said, "do you only think?" She laughed and said, "I am the Queen." "Well," he said, "why didn't you tell me, and I'd ha' drunk your blooming coffee." Then he looked at her, and he held up the mug, and he said, "Is this your mug, your Majesty?" She said, "No, that is the Y. M. C. A. property." He said, "Y. M. C. A. property is Tommy's, and I am going to send that home to my mother to hang up in the little house in Scotland, and tell her that the Queen served me with a cup of coffee and tea." He will prize that bit of crockery as long as he lives.

In France it was no trouble whatever to get the boys to a service, because every hut had a canteen in one end, and in the other end a little platform with a piano and a box of hymn books. You never saw such pianos! Every chord was the lost chord. And the boys all played. They all felt that they had the right to play, and they would play with one finger. Occasionally you found a brilliant pianist, and he was always popular, for the boys loved music.

They all loved to sing, especially songs of home. The most popular hymns were the biggest in hymnology, "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," "Rock of Ages," "Lead, Kindly Light," "My Jesus, I Love Thee," "There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood," "When I Survey the Won-

drous Cross on Which the Prince of Glory Died," "The King of Love My Shepherd Is," "There Is a Green Hill Far Away Without a City Wall," "My Faith Looks Up to Thee," "Abide with Me"—the great standard hymns of the Church. How they loved them! They would linger over songs like "Love's Old Sweet Song." Anything of mother in it, anything of lover in it, anything of home in it, they could not have enough of.

No, it was not difficult to get them into a service. There was a Cambridge professor, a chaplain, a very good man, and he came to me in one centre and said, "Gipsy Smith, I hear you are having a wonderful time with the boys." I said, "I am having the time of my life." He said, "They tell me they are all over you; but they don't come near me." I said, "No, no, I know of some things I wouldn't go near." So we chaffed each other, and after a while I said, "Do you want me to tell you what is the matter? Your method of attack is too academic. We don't want that out here. They want a bit of home brought right here to them, something that will make them think of home and father and mother, and loved ones; somebody that can introduce them quickly to Jesus, the great Lover of humanity. You see, I do not feel that the Lord ever meant anybody in this world to be a stick, not even as ecclesiastic. Just be human. Just be a man, just be a woman with the light of God's love shining through you and the world will find it out. These boys just want loving." My friend said, "I think you are too much of an optimist, Gipsy. I think the boys are sceptical." I said, "You come with me, and I will prove I am right. You come with me to-morrow night."

He came, and I took him to a hut where I was announced to speak. Though we got there half an hour

before the time advertised, 850 boys were jammed in that hut. You could not see across it for a blue haze. They were smoking, lots of them. Many of the boys were singing as we entered. One boy was at the piano (one finger playing, as usual), and the others were singing rag-time. They were singing something about a farm, something about an old rooster, and "a milk pail on your arm." They nearly lifted the roof. I said to my friend, the chaplain, "Isn't that a splendid way to begin the service?"

Supposing I had gone on that platform and said, "Now, boys, stop this ungodly music, put out your smokes; we are going to worship God." The boys would have gone out. My method of attack would have been wrong. I looked over this audience of British boys, I trusted them, and I knew that when I could reach the best in every one of them, every one of them would respond. So I said, "Boys, that was magnificent! You sang that splendidly!"

Mind you, I was going to have them put their smokes out before I began to talk to them, but I was not telling them how I was going to do it. So I said, "Boys, we must have another. You sang that very well, but you were not all singing. If we have another, will you all sing?" I knew if they said they would do it, they would do it, and I knew they could not sing and smoke, and when they started singing I kept them singing until the smokes were out and the air was partly clear.

So, first of all, I said, "We will have another," and they said, "All right, sir, what shall it be?" I said, "Why, one of the same sort." And what do you think they sang back at me? "Who's Your Lady Friend!" Those boys saw I was trying my best to get the swing of it, and before

I got through I caught the chorus. Then I said, "Boys, you did gloriously well, and we shall have one more. What shall we sing this time?" And what do you think they shouted back at me? "One of yours, sir, one of yours." I hadn't trusted them in vain. I said, "Have you got the books?" "Yes," they said. I said, "Turn over and choose," and from three or four places they shouted "149." Those who know the Y. M. C. A. hymn book will remember that 149 is "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross on Which the Prince of Glory Died."

Rag-time in France, you know, was an outlet for misery. It was a safety valve, and the boys shouted rag-time when they were hungry for love, and home, and God.

I have had a boy on each shoulder sobbing. I think particularly of a brilliant young public-school boy. He was a young sergeant. Up to the time he enlisted he had carried everything before him, and was a gold medallist. He laid his head on my shoulder and said: "I am homesick; I want my mother and I want Jesus."

And when we sang the four verses of "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," scores and even hundreds of boys were in tears. They were thinking of home and mother, and Sunday-school, and teachers, and friends. They were thinking of the home circle. It took them right back home. Then I said, "Now, boys, we will pray, and we will pray for mother and father, and brother and sister, and wife, and lover, and baby. We will pray for our comrades in the trenches, and those in the hospitals, and for those who are dying to-night." It was easy to pray.

When we finished the prayer I said, "Now sit down and I will tell you a story." You know I had to convince my chaplain friend that those boys were not sceptics. I

took them to a gipsy tent and showed them Jesus bringing my father home a new creature for the first time in his life, to pray with his motherless children. I told them how six preachers came from that tent.

I said to this crowd of boys, "Did my father make a mistake when he brought Christ to his tent that night?" "No, sir," they cried. "Did he do the right thing?" "Yes, sir." "What ought you to do?" "The same, sir," and then I said, "Every man in this house who wants Christ for his Saviour stand up." Every one of those 850 stood up as at the command, "Attention!" They stood up to say, "Christ for me." I turned to my chaplain friend, and I said, "Where is their scepticism?" He said, "Gipsy, I was mistaken."

I talked to the boys there as they sat with their gas-bags round their necks, and one held mine while I talked. It was quite a common thing to have something fall quite close to us while we were singing.

Imagine singing "Cover my defenceless head," just as a piece of the roof is falling in. Or—

"In death's dark vale I fear no ill  
With Thee, dear Lord, beside me"—

then another crash! That made things real. Every word was accompanied by the roar of guns—the rattle of the machine gun and the crack of the rifle. We never knew what it was to be quiet.

On one occasion I was asked to speak to a crowd of Munsters—all Irishmen, and Roman Catholics. A colleague said I should never get them to a meeting. Out there, however, there was no difference to me between Christians, Catholics, or Jews. They were all alike, and

all needed the same thing. So I had a notice put up on *green paper*, stating that Gipsy Smith would talk about Gipsy Life. I was fishing in unlikely waters, but they came—a thousand of them. If I had not been tactful I might soon have had them in an uproar. To have used the ordinary hymn books and to have talked in a stereotyped fashion would have been wrong bait for the Munsters.

So I walked on to the platform, and began the service by crying, "Are we downhearted?" The Irishmen roared "No!" I talked about Nature, about the Jesus, who puts the gold on the buttercup and the spots on the pansy, about the woods and the birds. The men laughed and cried. For six nights I talked to them in this way. On the third night one of the men came to me and said, "Begorrah, you're a gentleman!" He walked away, but I knew he had more to say, so I followed him up. Then he said, "Faix, sorr, you've got something I haven't. I can hear it when you're talking—like the singing of a bird." I said, "You can have it if you will pay the price." He said, "Begorrah, you'll be telling me to give up my religion next." I said, "If God has put anything in your life that helps you to be a better man, He does not want you to give it up. He only wants you to give up your sin." I said nothing about his creed. If I had done so my line would have broken. After a while we prayed together. When we rose, he kissed the back of my hand and cried, "Sorr, I've got it." "Got what?" I asked. "The little song in my soul," he replied. "It is singing now!"

Once I went to a convalescent camp to talk to the boys. When the service was over I dined in the mess and sat by the colonel. The major said, "I'm sorry the boys could not get in, Mr. Smith." "Hey!" cried the colonel.

"What's that! Couldn't you open the door?" I explained that 1,500 got in, but there were as many outside in the rain listening through the windows. "Well," said the colonel, "What was your show?" "Oh," I said, "we were singing and talking about the good Lord Jesus." "H'm," said the colonel, "you shall have them in to-morrow. We will have the big mess cleared out and what's more I'll take the chair!" When the morrow arrived we had 4,000 boys in the hut, all of them wounded. The colonel presided, supported by the officers. I heard afterwards that he asked the major, "What's he going to do—have a revival service? I hope he knows there are lots of Roman Catholics and lots of Jews." Of course, I did. The major said, "It will be all right, colonel." When one of the boys came to the piano, he saluted me. I said, "I'm not an officer, you need not salute me." He said significantly, "I'm not saluting the uniform." I told the colonel we were ready and he got up and said, "Officers and men, it is my honour and privilege to introduce Gipsy Smith, *who will now perform.*" Well, I began my performance by getting the boys to sing "Keep the Home Fires Burning," and "Pack Up Your Troubles," and a song about mother, "Down in Tennessee." Then I told the story of my conversion. At the close the old colonel, with tears in his eyes, said, "I can only say this—and everyone of you will agree with me—after this, we have all got to be better men."

I had all sorts of interesting experiences with the "boys." I had to be all things at all times. I have gone in to see what the boys were doing when they were having a moving picture show. I have gone in to see that everything was going on right, because we did all sorts of things behind the line to keep the boys in their spare

moments from going to worse places. When I would go in and they would "spot" me, they would shout "Turn the lights up!" They preferred me to the moving pictures, and my services to anything else, and they would stop a concert when I went in that they might have my message. Nothing reaches the human heart like a talk about home and mother. Preachers do not often have encores, but I had as many as five and six. You could not satisfy the boys. Their hunger was terrific. They flocked around, and they would say to me, "My mother was converted under you, my father was converted under you." They felt that they knew me. My past was an asset. I was a link to their old home. I didn't have to make a reputation, they knew me. I was a friend, and my message was always welcome.

The spirit of the boys was wonderful and the British humour saved the situation many a day. I went into a hospital one day and I saw five or six boys, each of whom had lost a limb and I said to them, "Boys, what struck you most when you got in the trenches?" One of them said, "A bit of shrapnel!"

Another boy had lost a leg. He had left his crutch in the corner, and he was hopping round on one foot. One of his chums looked at him and said, "Jack, your father must have been a brewer." "Why?" "He left you a lot of the hops!"

A friend of mine, a minister, went to see one of these boys, and he was pondering what he could say to him; he thought he had got to cheer him up. The boy looked at the padre and said:

"Guv'nor, don't get downhearted. I am going to make money out of this job. Why, I shall only want a pair of trousers with one leg, and I shall only want a coat with

one sleeve, and I shall only want a pair of boots with one boot."

A chaplain, who was my minister when I was at home, told me that in a convalescent hospital one of the patients was laughing so much that he complained that it would break his jaw. He was asked what the joke was, "Why," he said, "my chum over there had sausage for dinner, and he said he was sure it was made of cab-horses." "Why cab-horses?" my friend asked. "Why, he says when he cut a piece off the other moved up one!"

In England I came across a boy who had got his fourth wound. I had seen him three times before in France, and I said, "Where shall we meet again?" And he said, "In France." I said, "Haven't you got enough? This is your fourth time, you are not hungry for France again?" He said, "I don't know that I am hungry for France any more, but France is the only place for a man to go while this war is on." That was the spirit one met with everywhere.

No story of devotion to country in war impressed me more than that of Sergt. Nolan of Birmingham, Alabama, whose arm was shot off at Chateau Thierry. "I am so sorry," I said to the gallant lad, "that you have lost your arm." "Gipsy," he said as he straightened himself, and saluted with the other arm, "I did not lose it, I gave it gladly for the sake of America."

One of our dear boys I found with both legs blown away and both arms gone, only the trunk of him left. I put my hands to his dear face and kissed him and said, "Sonny, I have two hands and two legs, because you gave yours for me." He said, "Gipsy, I have only done what any man would be proud to do for those he loves."

I could tell hundreds of similar stories. I remember

hearing of a beautiful French girl who had been living a life of shame in Paris before the war. When the President called for volunteers to work in the picric acid factories that beautiful girl from the streets was one of the first. She went and worked until the poison turned her flesh a canary yellow and her hair canary yellow, and her eyes canary yellow. Then her hair began to fall out and she was dying. All her beauty was gone. The doctor said, "You will have to leave this work." She said, "Never!" He said, "You will die." She said, "Doctor, I have only one life to give and it has not been a good life. God forgive me. I see it all now, when it is too late. I am ashamed of it, and I have thought over it night and day. It has been a bad life I know, but if God will let me I will gladly lay it down with the boys of France for the freedom of the world." There was the spirit that won the war. That is the spirit that will win in the war with the world, the flesh and the devil.

When I was at Arras I had not seen a fire for weeks, and was so cold my moustache froze to the blanket. The best meal I had was some French bread, some condensed milk and some hot water. Suddenly a general (a wearer of the Star of India and Victoria Cross) came with a staff officer and invited me to the mess. He said he would arrange dinner so as not to clash with my boys' meetings. I asked him why he was so interested in me. "Well," he said, "we have seen so many letters with your name in them. The boys are telling their mothers, wives, and sweethearts that a new force has come into their lives, and the officers would like to have a chat and hear more about it."

I saw the boys under all sorts of conditions. I saw them in the front line trenches. I saw them behind the

big guns and the machine guns. I was up so close that I crept out into a listening post under the barbed wire; I was so close to the German lines I could hear the Germans speaking. Once when I was on my way to conduct a service with a padre a big shell burst on the other side of a wall by which we were walking. We could always tell when those shells were coming straight for us. We were dazed for the moment by the tremendous concussion. Before I got to my feet I found myself counting my fingers to see if they were all on. Then I said, "That is all right," and tried first one foot and then the other, "That is all right." Then I sort of looked over my shoulder and I said to my companion, "Are you there?" He said, "Yes, I am here." I said, "Why don't you get up?" And he said, "Why don't *you* get up?" I said, "Well, I am getting up!" Then I turned round and saw, just above my head where I stood, in that French wall, there was a big V. The shell had burst the other side and blown that V through. It was pretty close, but I went on and preached to the boys, and had a good time, and got back, and went again the next night and the next. I went through four gas attacks. I was just where the boys were, and I never got a scratch, and I never had any ill effects from the three and a half years of strenuous toil and hardship of the war.

## CHAPTER XI

MORE STORIES FROM THE WAR.—LITTLE LESSONS  
FROM GREAT LIVES.—THE SOLDIERS' PRAYERS.

I USED to do all sorts of things for those glorious boys. I remember being in one camp when a "Tommy" came up to me, and said, "Gipsy, you know what you did for me a few weeks ago, I gave my heart to God, and I am going to play the game. It was a bit of a fight, but I am going to see it through." He took out of his pocketbook the picture of his girl. He said, "Look here, that is my 'steady.' What do you think of her?" I said, "She is a nice-looking girl." He said, "She is a bit of all right! She is a Sunday school teacher, and she is a Christian, I have loved her all my life (and he was nearly thirty), but she wouldn't marry me though she loved me, too. She told me again and again, 'Harry, I shall never marry you till you give your heart to God. I can never be your wife till you are a Christian!' " He said, "Now you know what has happened. And that is the girl, sir. Now in so many days is her birthday, and I want to send her a present."

I said, "That is all right, Harry, I hope you will send her something nice." He said, "I can't get off to make the purchase, I can't get leave." Then I began to see light. He said, "I have been wondering if you would make a purchase for me." I said, "Harry, how can I do it? I don't know her." Well," he said, "just imagine she

is your girl!" He took out of his pocket a roll of franc notes and said, "Now, sir, you just go to the shop and spend that, all of it, if you will, do what you like, and get her something nice."

I went down and made the purchase. I bought one of those dainty things that ladies wear round their necks, and I got a box and string and sealing wax, and I said, "Now, Harry, write your note, show it to your officer, get it franked, and seal it up and send it." I added: "God bless you, and bless your girl."

In three weeks' time Harry came up to me again with his flag flying. He said, "She got it, and I want to show you her reply." He pulled out the letter and he said, "I want you to read it all, sir." I said, "It is a love letter, Harry." He said, "I know it is." "Well," I said, "it is for you, not for me." He said, "It is about you, too, she thanks God for you and her prayers answered and wants you to know it." "Just let me see that place, double it over, and keep the rest for yourself." But I must read it all. Nothing less would satisfy him. So I took his letter, and when I got to the bottom there was a row of marks across the bottom, and I said, "Harry, what are these?" He said, "Go on!" I said, "Come on, I want to know." He said, "You go on, you've had some!" "Now," I said, "none of your nonsense. Come right here and tell me what these are." "Well," he said, "Mr. Smith, that is the barbed wire entanglements!"

A boy like that was worth going a long way to serve. Amid the tears and the blood, and the suffering and the deprivation, and the homesickness and the hardships over there through which I passed for three and a half years, they were the happiest of my life. Over and over again when I have been preaching since, mothers and wives,

and sweethearts and young widows have come up to me and said, "Gipsy Smith, my boy's last letter before he died had your name in it." I have had mothers kiss my hand and say, "I want to kiss the hand of the man that led my boy to Christ." I saw thousands of boys, thousands and thousands, turn their hearts to God during those three and a half years. During the days of the war, from the beginning to the end, half a million British boys signed decision cards in Y. M. C. A. huts and other centres and gave themselves to Christ. Five hundred thousand officers and men!

One never-to-be-forgotten day during the war I was at home in London from the trenches on a rest. I had ten days' leave. I came up to Charing Cross as a great throng of people had gathered there. I knew what the occasion was. King George and Queen Mary were driving through the city to hearten their people and show them they were with them in sympathy and love and prayer in that day of sorrow. The police and soldiers stood in line to keep the crowd back, so that the royal carriage might pass.

A soldier stood before me on two crutches, looking eagerly up the street. When the King and Queen came slowly along, the crippled soldier suddenly broke through, and as the King went by, just touched his hand lightly and said, "God bless you, sir." When a rather frightened policeman rushed forward and asked him why he had done so, he said, "I gave my limb for him, I shed my blood for him, I had a right to break through."

Ah, those wonderful boys taught us all a lesson. They knew how to die. They knew how to suffer. They knew how to make sacrifices. I came across a trench hole with nine boys, wounded in it. Most of them died before they

were removed from that shell hole. A friend was with me, and he had a water-bottle on his belt, and he took it out and held that bottle to the lips of the boys, each one of the nine, and when he got it back from the last boy, it was as full as when he put it to the lips of the first boy. Every boy had left it for the other fellow. Not a boy touched it! One of those dear boys said just before he died, I will never forget it, as he looked at me, "Gipsy, did I do my best? Did I do my best?"

I came across one of them and I said, "What are you doing here? You are an American?" He said, "Yes, I was born in Michigan." "Well," I said, "What are you fighting here under the British flag for?" His left arm was so twisted that it would never be straight again, and he said, "This is my fight. This is not a fight alone, for France, or for Belgium, or for Russia or for England; this is a fight for the race, and I couldn't have been a man and kept out of it."

That was the spirit everywhere. There were American boys and Canadian boys and French boys, and Irish and Welsh and South African boys, and there were Gipsy boys and there were the boys in kilts. Those who saw a regiment of kilties going up the line would never forget the sight. When the French saw them first they did not know what they were. They did not know whether they were men or women. One cute little Frenchman said, "What are they?" A smart young Scotsman said, "Oh, these are what they call the 'middle sex' regiment!"

One night I stopped in the middle of one of my talks in a hut and I said, "Look here, boys, have you written to your mother this week?" They looked at me. I wonder what some congregations would do if the preacher stopped in the middle of a sermon and said, "Have you paid your

debts this week?" "Have you husbands been kind to your wives this week?" and, "Have you wives been considerate of your husbands?" or "Have you made your home and yourself as attractive as you ought?"

When I stopped and said, "Boys, have you written to your mothers this week? Those who have, stand up," those who could honestly say so stood up, and I said to the rest of them, "If you fellows don't write before you go to sleep to-night I will give you all C. B.! As soon as I have finished talking I am going to distribute paper to you fellows who have to write home." I thought if I could keep them in touch with mother that it was a bit of religion. I stood one hour and a half after I finished my talk giving away writing paper and envelopes to wounded boys that they might write home. While I was busy the leader of the hut came to me and said, "Gipsy, there is a man at the back there who wants to see you." In the hour and a half that I had taken to distribute the paper this man had written his letter, and he was in great distress. I said to the leader, "You 'carry on' here, and I will go back and see him."

The man threw a letter on the table unsealed, and he said, "You told me to write to mother, and I have written. Take it and read it." I picked it up and read it, and it said, "My Dear Mother: It is seven years since I wrote to you. I have done my best to break your heart. I know I have turned your hair gray. I have played the fool, and I have gone to the devil. Drink, gambling, and fast living have made me forget you. But yesterday and to-day I heard Gipsy Smith, and I have given my heart to God. I don't ask you to believe me, for I do not deserve your confidence. I wont ask you to forgive me, for I

don't think you can, but I ask for a bit of time that I might prove my sincerity. Your boy, JACK."

The big tears were rolling down his cheeks. He was not a child. He was over forty years old. He said, "Will that do?" I said, "Oh, my brother, it is just the thing for a broken-hearted mother. But look, there is a space at the bottom for a postscript. Shall I write a postscript for you?" He said, "Yes, she will believe you." I said, "I will, but before we write that we will kneel down and pray." Nothing breaks a sinner's heart like praying with him—not praying *at* him, but praying *with* him. When we were on our knees I said, "Jack, you pray." He said, "I can't pray; I have not prayed since I was a kid." I said, "Did you pray then?" And he said, "Yes, I did; my mother taught me." A boy never forgets the prayers his mother taught him. There was not a man who went to the front who had forgotten any prayer that his mother taught him. We knelt together in prayer. He put his hands together like a child, and repeated: "Jesus tender Shepherd, hear me." Then I added a postscript to his letter telling his mother that Jesus had saved her son. When I signed it, for once I was really proud of the name I had made. Later on came a joyful letter from the mother who said, "This my son was dead, but is alive again!"

I found that all the boys prayed when they went over the top—all of them. One big sergeant, when I asked him what his prayer was when he went over replied, "Well, sir, it was just this: 'O God, Thy mercy! O God Thy mercy!'"

Early in the war a friend of mine in Bristol was reading in the paper about the terrible happenings in Belgium. He saw his own little children playing on the floor, and

thought what might happen to them. He went to a recruiting office and said, "Take me, and my car as well." When he got to camp he was in a hut with men, many of whom were swearing, and telling lewd stories, but that first night he openly read a portion from his Testament, and said his prayers as usual. The next night one of the men said, "Why don't you read that book aloud?" He said, "I will gladly, if you wish." He read the Scripture portion. Another man said, "Why not pray aloud, too?" He led them all in the Lord's Prayer.

Then a tall, handsome man who had been watching him went over to his bed and said, "Are you married?" "Yes," said my friend. "Well, give me your wife's address." "What for?" "Why," said the man quietly, "I should like to write and tell her she ought to be proud of you. I am ——— (giving the name of one of the most popular singers in the concert world), and I'm glad I've struck a camp where I find on the first night a man who is not afraid to pray."

The prayers of those boys would make a book in themselves. There were no old-fashioned phrases. You know what I mean—people begin at a certain place, and there is no stopping them till they get to another certain place. One of these boys began, "Please God, You know I've been a rotter." That is the way to pray.

Once I was talking to a crowd of Canadians—and they were fine boys. "I want you all to promise," I said, "that you'll kneel down and say your prayers to-night in the billet, and those of you who will promise to do that come up and shake hands with me as you go out." I was kept one half-hour shaking hands.

Now, there were nine fellows sleeping in one billet and not one knew the other eight had been to the meeting.

They all got mixed up, but all the nine came up to shake hands, and the one that got back to billets first told the story afterwards. This one had made up his mind he would kneel down and say his prayers, but when he returned he found there was no one there. Somehow he felt different then—he felt he couldn't do it. He was more afraid of nobody than he would have been of somebody. Then just suppose the others came back and found him kneeling there!

"I funk'd it," he said. "I got under the blanket, and tried to say my prayers under the blanket, but it wouldn't work. Then I heard one man come into the room, then two, three, four, five, six, seven, and eight. And the eighth man was the champion swearer of the company."

"Boys," said this man, "did you hear the Gipsy?"

"Yes," they said, "we heard him."

And the little chap under the blanket said "Yes," too.

"Well, I shook hands with that man; and I promised him for my mother's sake that I'd kneel down and say my prayers to-night."

And the little fellow under the blanket jumped up, blanket and all, and cried, "So did I! I'm with you!"

The others said, "So did we."

"Well," the last comer said, "the best thing we can do is to kneel down and say a little prayer."

So they knelt down, and each said a little prayer, finishing up with the Lord's Prayer.

Then the champion swearer said, "Boys, I've cut it all out: no more drink—not another drop."

And they said, "Righto! We are with you. We'll cut it out."

Then he said, "I've cut something else out. No more swearing."

Eighty-five times out of every hundred that the boys in France used a swear-word they meant no more than I do if I say, "Great Scot."

"Do you, boys?" I asked them.

"No, sir," they invariably replied.

"Well, then, why do you use these swear-words?"

And then I had got them, and out of their own mouths they were condemned. I used to tell them it was bad form, and I said, "Cut it out."

These boys made a solemn compact that night that the first man who swore should clean all nine guns. Before the week was out my champion was cleaning those guns. His chums were sports. They didn't forsake him. They said, "Buck up, old boy. We'll help you."

"No," he said. "This is my job."

So they stood by him and cheered him on. People, I say again, don't die of overmuch love, but for the want of a bit of it. These boys stood by my champion swearer, and when he was putting the polishing touches on the last gun, he stood up, his face radiant, like a man that has fought a battle and won: "Boys, this is the last gun I shall clean for anybody under these conditions, because, God helping me, I'm going to see this thing through."

And he *did* see it through.

I got home every four months, just for a few days, to get a little relief, for I had been where I could not sleep, night or day, and the last month of each of those four months I do not think I slept three hours in the twenty-four. The sights and sounds were too great for sleep. I used to toss when I was under my blanket in a cellar, or wherever I was, and say, "Where are my boys, my precious boys?" I learned to love them with the love of

a mother. They were the noblest boys, without any profession of religion, the noblest boys that God ever made.

I came home on one of these trips on leave, and I got stranded at the railway station at Lincoln. I wanted to go to Sheffield, where I was due to preach the next day. When the train pulled up at the station platform at Lincoln we had had instructions to get out. I said, "When do we get a train?" And the porter said, "Can't tell you!" All traffic was set aside, as it should be, for the boys who were going to the front, and for munitions. I waited there for two hours, wondering when I should get on the train to Sheffield. Presently a train came in that was picking up at all stations *en route* the boys who had been on leave, and who were going back to the front.

There was a fine young fellow going back to France. With him to bid him good-bye were three beautiful girls, silently weeping. I could tell that two were his sisters, and the third was either his sweetheart or his young wife. He opened the carriage door and put in his equipment and then took his two sisters in his arms and kissed them good-bye. Then he opened his arms and took in the one who was dearest in the world to him, and he held her silently. The bell sounded, and I am not ashamed to say my tears mingled with theirs. Then he went into the carriage and opened the window and put his hand out and felt for the hand of the girl he loved, and their tears fell together.

I thought my opportunity had come, so I went to him and put my hand on his arm and whispered, "God lives, God is on the throne. He knows the sacrifice you are prepared to make. He knows those you are leaving behind and He will take care of them." He looked at me through his tears and said, "I don't know you." I said, "Never

mind who I am. God is on His throne. Put your trust in Him as your Father, Saviour and Friend." He said, "God helping me, I will do it now. Thank you for that word. It is just what I have been longing for." The train moved out and I never saw him again. But all around us are people who have that same longing for the simple word that may dry tears and bring pardon and love and life.

I cannot omit one beautiful story. Twenty years ago, when we went to live at Cambridge, my daughter Zillah went to the Wesleyan preacher, the Rev. William Bradfield, and said, "Mr. Bradfield, I want to do some work for Christ." He said, "Well, Zillah, what can you do?" She said, "Well, I don't know, but I taught in the school at Manchester." He said, "You are very young, but we have one class that needs a teacher. Nobody will go to it. They are boys, and some are older than you. Will you take it?" "Yes," said Zillah, "I will start next Sunday." When Zillah came home on the Sunday and I asked her how she had got on she said, with a little catch in her voice, "Not very well, daddy, but I shall never rest until every one of my seventeen boys has given his heart to God." She started praying. She wrote letters to the boys. She invited them to a meal that she might talk with them. She lent them books from my study. She went out walking that she might talk to them about the Saviour. One day she said, "Daddy, when will you be home on a Sunday?" I looked at the calendar and I said, "I shall be home on such and such a date." She said, "That will be Communion Sunday." That Sunday came, and when we went to church Zillah said, "I have a surprise for you, daddy." She brought every one of those boys to the Lord's table. She had won every one for Christ.

When the war broke out and the boys had gone, the minister read every week the honour roll, that we might pray for them. One Sunday, when we were thinking of the fallen (I was then at home on furlough) Zillah laid her head on my shoulder and said, "Daddy, seventeen of those dear boys are mine, for I led them to Christ."

There is much more I should like to tell of the war days, but this must suffice. There are echoes of them every day I live. I need hardly say that I value highly the distinction of Member of the British Empire bestowed upon me by his Majesty the King. I have never sought titles. Plain Gipsy Smith was always good enough for me. But such a recognition of my war service was very deeply appreciated.

Since the war I have held scores of meetings to which ex-service men were specially invited. I was determined that I would lose no opportunity of reminding the public of all that our brave boys suffered, and no meetings have been more popular. In several towns they were followed by an impressive ceremony which touched thousands of people who had attended the missions, the whole audience accompanying me to the local cenotaph where I deposited a wreath in memory of those who made the great sacrifice. I shall have something more to say about these incidents, however, later on. I am inexpressibly grateful to God that I was allowed to "do my bit," and to my dying day I shall treasure the memory of the better side of those tragic years. I still find, whenever ex-soldiers are gathered together, a manly gospel appeal will meet with an instantaneous response.

The other day I was in a railway carriage and, as often happens, a father asked me how it is that since the war my boys do not come to church with me. I replied, "The

boys who went out to France came face to face with grim reality and they learned to hate shams." Where people cease playing at religion, and begin to live it, the lads who showed so fine a spirit at that great crisis in the country's history will come back to the Church, and the call to heroic service for Christ will not fall on deaf ears. They want the living Christ and the living Message. It isn't creed; it's need. Do not get the notion that the boys can't be reached, and don't you think that the boys are hostile to Christianity. They are not. I will not hear it without protest. The best things that the old Book talks about are the things the boys love in one another. They don't always think of the Book, but they love the fruits of the Spirit in one another. They love truth, honour, courage, humility, friendship, loyalty. And where do you get those things? Why, they have their roots in the Cross—they grow on that Tree.

I shook hands with a boy a little while ago in Scarborough, and he said, "I believe I hold the record for having lost most in the war. I have lost five brothers, my sister was killed in the war, and my mother died of a broken heart through grief, but," he said, "I'll give my next week's pay, sir, towards the new Y. M. C. A. hut."

Many a time in France when I was wet through to my skin, and up to my knees in mud, glad to lie down anywhere, with shells bursting everywhere about me, hungry and half frozen, I have had the boys come up to me and say, "Mr. Smith, why are you here? You are not forced to be here. You are over age, why do you put up with it?" I used to look at them and say, "Boys, I am physically fit. What would you think of me believing as I do, saying I love Jesus, if I shirked my duty, if I was not willing to suffer with you, that I may help you and

tell you of Him who loves you?" "Oh, well, sir," they would say, "If you put it like that, we can understand." Of course they could. Our brave boys knew the real thing from the sham and from the hypocrisy. They know the thing that was mere camouflage—going to church just to save one's own miserable reputation; they know the real thing that is prepared to suffer and bleed and die in saving other people. We have not to deal to-day with blatant infidelity. If you had been with me in France in the mud and the blood, amid the bursting bombs and shells and gas attacks, you would have found no such infidelity. In my movements amongst men, whether in America or in my own country, or Australia, or South Africa, I have found that the days of blatant scepticism and unbelief have very largely passed away.

I recall one fine boy who said to me, "I go to church occasionally—if a friend is getting married. I know the story of the Christian faith a little, but it has never really meant anything to me."

Then he continued slowly, "On the Somme, a few hours before I was badly wounded"—he put his hand in his pocket and drew out a little crucifix—"I picked up that little crucifix and I put it in my pack, and when I got to hospital I found that little crucifix on my table. One of the nurses or the orderlies had put it there, thinking I was a Catholic. But I know I'm not, sir. I am *nothing*. I have been looking at this little crucifix so often since I was wounded, and I look at it till my eyes fill with tears, because it reminds me of what He did for me—not this little bit of metal, but what it means."

I said, "Have you ever prayed?"

He replied, "No, sir. I've wept over this little crucifix—is that prayer?"

"That's prayer of the best sort," I said. "Every tear contained volumes you could not utter, and God read every word. He knows all about it."

I pulled out a little khaki Testament. "Would you like it?" I said. "Would you read it?"

He answered, "Yes," and with a beautiful light in his eyes signed the decision in the cover.

I heard the boys say lots of things against the Church in general and the manner in which churches are conducted. What they said might be often just, very often true. But I never heard one thing murmured against Jesus.

I saw a remnant of one division, not many left; a few hundreds of men out of thousands. Cut up, broken, worn and wan, sleepless, hungry, wet through, I saw these boys in the most abject condition, after one of the most terrible battles of the war. They expected to be ordered back for rest and reinforcements to come up.

Suddenly came the command. The command came to march back to the front. Without a word they stood to attention and at the word marched back whence they had come, back through the little ruined village.

I stood at a corner watching them, and at the other corner hung a crucifix. Each boy as he passed took off his "tin hat" and bowed his head. They had nothing to say about Jesus. They revered Him. They recognised His claims. They might have a good deal to say about some of His professed followers. For *Him* they had nothing but silent homage.

## CHAPTER XII

### TYPICAL AMERICAN CAMPAIGNS.—THE GREAT SCENES IN LOUISVILLE AND NASHVILLE.—AN AMERICAN INTERVIEW.

IN the course of the past thirty-five years I have been to America twenty times. Winter after winter I have crossed the ocean and conducted huge missions, and were I to describe all of these, with reference to the voluminous press reports which fill many shelves in my home, one bulky volume would not suffice. Perhaps I had better say something first about the most recent experiences I have had on the other side, for they are typical of the rest.

Of great centres like Louisville, Nashville, and Indianapolis, how much might be written! In my last great campaign at Louisville, Ky., in 1920, 6,000 people gathered in a specially erected tabernacle. The Flag of Christ, a white pennant on a blue cross, was raised above the Stars and Stripes on the Tabernacle by a troop of boy scouts. At the first meeting a pulpit was presented to me, but, said a local newspaper, "the Gipsy shoved that out of the way." I appreciated the thought, but have always preferred to speak from an unfurnished platform. Negro residents from the neighbouring alleys peered in at the side windows. They said they had come "to see the white folks get religion." Here as many as 400 persons at evening services pressed to the front to tell me they needed Christ. Five thousand young folk attended

one meeting at which there were 2,000 decision cards signed. As the young enquirers passed along the aisles, we who were on the rostrum were much impressed by the sight of a great human cross composed of Louisville boys and girls who had decided to follow Jesus.

Here I had several meetings with leading business men, being guest of honour at four clubs. Each meeting concluded with prayers. We had one great meeting for officers of churches. Cards bearing the following pledge were signed by hundreds of officials :

"I humbly acknowledge my unworthiness as an officer of the church and desire to rededicate myself and my powers to my God and my church, and henceforth to seek to live for the salvation of the city and the world and do hereby pledge myself to co-operate with my pastor in all the spiritual work of my church."

We had a special meeting for old persons, invalids and "shut-ins," for which purpose scores of people lent the cars. I also addressed at their own request an audience of members of theatrical companies playing in Louisville.

At one meeting I called for those to rise who desired the coming of the Holy Spirit. All over the Tabernacle people rose. To my right were seated two old ladies, evidently sisters. One rose and I saw her. The second rose later, and I said, "Sister, you must be in earnest if you rise twice." Afterwards I discovered they were twins!

On the first Sunday night a wealthy, influential business man known in four industrial cities called me late at night on the telephone at my hotel, and asked to see me. "But I am ready for bed," I protested. "Never mind," he said, "I'll come right up. I must see this thing through to-night,

because I am going away to-morrow, and I want to know I am right before another day dawns." Shortly afterwards the man arrived, and in my bedroom he knelt and pleaded for pardon. There can be no joy on earth like the joy that came over that man when he rose from his knees and assured me, with tears in his eyes, that he was saved.

On another occasion there was a loud knock at my door one morning at seven o'clock. I thought it was the bell-boy, and, as I was in my bath, I let him wait. As he kept on hammering at the door, I stepped out and said, "Who's there?" A voice said, "A very sick man, who must see you." As soon as I could, I opened the door. A man came in and said, "For forty years I have been carrying a burden. You see this little black bag? It is full of money which I stole from my employers many years ago. It is all there, with interest. I heard your sermon on 'stripe-washing,' and I have had no peace since." We knelt in prayer. Almost before his knees had touched the floor he cried, "Glory to God, I have found my mother's Jesus." He afterwards said it was the happiest day of his life. He was going to restore the money, and at the women's meeting I was to address in the afternoon he wanted me to tell his wife and the whole company what he had done. I did so. At the night meeting I mentioned the incident, and the man stood up and cried, "I am here, and so is Jesus—in my heart!"

In this one campaign there were 15,000 professed conversions and re-consecrations—4,000 of them officials of the churches who had re-dedicated themselves. I was in Louisville 29 days and addressed over 232,000 persons. One pastor said I had preached the Fifth Gospel in Louisville—not the Gospel written in ink or stone, but one

written on the heart. "I think," he said, "of Sam Walter Foss's poem about the man who lived by the side of the road and was a friend of man. Gipsy Smith lives in God's house by the side of God's highway, and is a friend to passers by."

Another typical American campaign was the one I conducted at Indianapolis early in 1921. Nearly 15,000 persons signed decision cards. Many of the churches reported unusually large increases in the membership. "The meetings," said Governor McCray, "have made Indianapolis a better city in which to live." "Nothing," said the secretary of the Indiana Federation of Churches, "could be better than the sane and sweet, yet strong presentation of the Gospel by Gipsy Smith." "The effect of the meetings will linger long after the evangelist has gone," said the Rev. C. H. Winders, executive secretary of the Indianapolis Church Federation. "The power of his ministry has been wonderful, touching many hearts and lives. The city can never be the same, the church, the home, business, industry, and amusement must all feel the wholesome effect of the meetings."

An editor who was greatly interested in the Indianapolis campaign devoted to it a leader in which he said: "All of the churches can meet, and most of them in Indianapolis have met, on common ground. Gipsy Smith does not plead for a particular denomination, but for a regeneration of those within the Church and an awakening of those without. To that end he preaches the old Gospel that man must get right with himself and his neighbours, and must be a Christian in fact instead of in name. Great good can and will come from the Gipsy Smith meetings. The purpose of this revival is a spiritual awakening of the city of Indianapolis. That means help-

ing not one church, but all. It means bringing the people to a realisation that their greatest concern is with their own souls."

One of the newspapers which devoted much space to the campaign said, "When Mayor Charles W. Jewett returned to his office yesterday after an illness of several days his first official action was to order the placing of pictures of Gipsy Smith on the windows of the City Hall. "I believe," he said, "these meetings are proving to be one of the best influences for good that our city has had."

On another occasion Mayor Jewett said: "Nothing has happened in this city in the last quarter of a century which has had such a powerful effect for good. No man could exert the influence over people which the Gipsy does if he were not a sincere man, because God would not let him."

I shall always think with peculiar pleasure and gratitude of the kindness and responsiveness of the citizens of Indianapolis. One incident is treasured beyond words. Twenty-seven years ago I conducted a mission in Indianapolis. I was feeling lonely and homesick, and longed for friendship. Somehow I touched the heart of a little girl, aged six, and led her to Christ. She used to come to the meetings and sit by me, and when the time came for me to leave she was disconsolate. She cried, "What shall I do now?" At the farewell meeting the little one walked up to the pulpit and brought me a present. It was a piece of paper in which were wrapped four beech-nuts and a little china doll. I have three of the nuts and the doll in my possession now.

I never expected to see that child again. But in 1921 I visited the same city, and in my hotel was a magnificent bouquet of flowers. I found they had been sent by my

little friend—now the wife of a successful business man and one of the most influential Christian women in this city of 250,000 people. The leading newspaper of the city gave her considerable space each week, so that she might talk to the women of the city on important topics. In 1922 I was conducting a mission at Sheffield, when this lady and her husband, who were motoring through England, attended several meetings. Thus I was able to tell the beautiful little story, and at the close to ask my friends who were in the audience to stand. They had an enthusiastic welcome.

I feel I must refer especially, also, to the amazing campaign I held in Nashville from October, 1921, to March, 1922. The meetings were held at the Ryman Auditorium. A conservative estimate of those who tried to attend the meetings at the auditorium, on one Sunday alone, placed the figure at between fifteen and twenty thousand. The policemen on duty were authority for the statement that at least three thousand people were turned away at both afternoon and night services.

There were special features which will long remain in my memory. At one meeting representatives of various schools (the city being a university centre), came and decorated me with their colours. I had pennants streaming from my back, an arm band on one arm, and a rainbow of college ribbons on my breast. I even donned a football sweater for a few minutes, and they said I looked a true Gipsy in such gala colours. I wore the armband and ribbons throughout the service. Standing as the names of their schools were read, each group of students sang either a school song or gave a school yell, "Rah! rah! rah!" The students of the blind school sang "Holy Night" beautifully. A feature of the Tuesday night

service was the fervour and enthusiasm in which the great crowd of men and women sang "I Am Bound for the Promised Land." This old revival favourite of the South gained a tremendous place in the hearts of Nashville during the revival, and I loved to hear it. This was the first city in which the symphony orchestra volunteered to help in a revival. At one meeting I greeted one hundred and twenty-five employees of a great insurance company, and told them I wanted to insure them for eternity. At another meeting I remember I told of a man who had come to me and said, "You've simply knocked the devil out of me." The man himself then stood up and testified before the great crowd of his joy in allegiance to Christ. "If you ask me if I'm happy," he said, "I'll tell you, 'Simply to the Cross I cling.'" This convert was a well-known Nashville citizen, former deputy county clerk and son of a distinguished judge.

On "Mothers' Day" a giant loving cup was presented during this celebration. The cup was four feet in height, and was fashioned of many hundreds of jonquils given by members of Parent-Teacher Associations and school children. In connection with this celebration, we had a meeting for "shut-ins." Cards were distributed bearing the words: "I will gladly loan my automobile with driver for the afternoon." No fewer than 300 cars were thus loaned and used!

The Nashville newspapers gave an immense amount of space to the meetings. One of the papers printed a big cartoon entitled, "Au revoir, Gipsy, not good-bye," representing a Nashville citizen saying to me, "Gip, we can never repay you for the good you have done this city. We know you are going to the most wonderful place in the world, Home, and that's the only reason we are per-

mitting you to leave." In the background the artist portrayed a horned figure saying, "That Gipsy Smith person certainly has ruined my reputation!"

Another big cartoon showed the evil one lying in bed. By the bedside sat Dr. Nashville. "Doctor, will I get well?" was the legend proceeding from the mouth of the Satan. "No, I don't think you'll last the rest of the week," was the reply. (Aside) "Gipsy Smith sure give him a wallop!"

On a rest day the lobby of the Hermitage Hotel was crowded with people who clamoured for a personal interview. In the morning I had in my room no fewer than twenty-five such interviews.

"The fruits of this revival," said Dr. O. E. Goddard, "will be seen ten million years hence in Heaven. More important than a new railroad or a new college, indeed the most important event for many years, is this great revival."

Some of the newspaper advertisements were very remarkable. One announced in thick, bold type, "A whole town turned upside down! Gipsy, the little minister, is coming! Prepare for a big shock." I was described by another paper as "Travelling man for the King of Kings, optimist, patriot, and lover of mankind." Another remarked, "Gipsy has the devil on the run in Nashville."

So voluminous were the newspaper reports, that Dr. James I. Vance, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, found it necessary to give the lie publicly to a rumour that newspapers were paid for the publication of them. Recently I was delighted to receive from Nashville a newspaper which—one year after the close of the campaign—had an editorial recalling the mission, and stating that its effects were being seen all over the city. The mission

choruses, the editor stated, were still being sung, and hundreds of converts were now earnest and devoted church workers. At the closing meeting in the Ryman Auditorium the choir paid to the missionary a remarkable tribute in verse. A poem was recited, of which I may be permitted to give one or two verses :

“Great the good that he has done us!  
Great the boon in Nashville brought!  
Great the love to which he won us,  
Greater still the future sought!

“For his pure and holy mission  
In our homes and in our hearts,  
Still must bear the true fruition,  
Of those ties which nothing parts.

(Choir hums Gipsy's favourites.)  
“We'll sing anthems up in glory  
To the God you love so well;  
And we'll hear no sweeter story  
Than 'there'll be no sad farewell.'”

“Good-bye, Gipsy, we will meet you  
On the resurrection morn;  
And by God's sweet grace we'll greet you  
With some stars your crown to adorn.”

Here is an extract from a typical American interview, written up by a persistent reporter who waited upon me early in the morning of my departure from Nashville:

“Even our brief conversation was several times interrupted by the ringing of the phone. Hundreds of people seemed eager and waiting to ask the advice of the evan-

gelist in matters relating to their soul's welfare, or to thank him for the new spirit of Christianity brought into their lives. A number of long-distance calls were received from outlying towns. Here is a sample of Gipsy Smith's part of a phone conversation which I jotted down while waiting:

"'Yes, this is Gipsy . . . I remember you . . . I thank you; I thank you; but I am unworthy. You know, I am just like other men. I have to fight temptation and pray a lot—pray a lot. . . . O, I am glad you have found Him again. I know we have all learned more of Him during these days . . . No. You will not fall again. Christ will keep you. . . . Pray, and take your Jesus with you everywhere. Isn't He a wonderful Saviour? . . . Thank you, Mr. —, be true to my Master and remember me. I will pray for you. . . . Yes. . . . Good-bye.' "

"And Gipsy Smith, hanging up the receiver for perhaps the tenth time within a space of fifteen minutes, said, 'That man I was just talking to has been a drunkard for thirty years. In my meeting yesterday afternoon he got converted, and he has promised God never to take another drink. He went home and said grace at his own table for the first time for many years. That is only one of the results. And another: he is a prominent business man of the city. I met him at the Commercial Club luncheon. He says that his morality is his curse. You know I have said that a man's religion and goodness may send him to hell as well as his atheism. Well, this man was one of that kind. He is too moral to be human, and Jesus can't save a marble statue. But here,' the Gipsy went on, 'is one of the most magnificent works of grace which has been wrought in your city by this campaign.

I won't tell you the names, but there is a certain man who is very wealthy and prominent here. He was married—but he had a child whose mother was not his wife. And his wife knew about that other woman. She came to the meeting and was inspired of the Spirit. She went to this other woman and spoke to her kindly and frankly, and asked her to release her husband. But she needed spiritual help, and they called in one of your local pastors. And later the husband came. Well, the outcome of it all was that the wife adopted the other woman's child, and the father has assumed the responsibility of his own child. Only a mighty touch of the Spirit of Christ on that woman's heart could have accomplished that.' ”

## CHAPTER XIII

MORE AMERICAN EXPERIENCES.—A WORD ABOUT  
THE COLOURED PEOPLE.—SOME CHEERFUL  
STORIES.—A BIT OF AMERICAN JOURNALISM.

I AM convinced that the very cream of the American people may be found in the churches. I believe that they are heart and soul in sympathy with the British people, and (I write in 1923) that if the best of the American voters had their way America would be in the League of Nations at once. My general impression is that the American nation some day will be the greatest nation the world has ever seen. At the moment they are as it were in the melting pot, but they will emerge strong, virile, dominating. The Americans have an open mind. Any man who goes to them with a message is sure of a hearing. They do not ask, Who was your father? or, How much have you got? but, What are *you*? Can you deliver the goods? I like the sociability in the American churches. In England, as soon as the benediction is pronounced, we rush out. In America the worshippers seem to rush at each other. It is usual to see quite a crowd of people streaming up to the minister to shake hands and to thank him for his sermon. Some of our preachers would be quite astonished and embarrassed if their congregations did this. The Americans are far less stiff and formal than we are. I am quite certain their ministers preach all the better because of the encouragement they receive.

In America our friends have been passing through a very critical period. Here in this country we have largely emerged from the trouble attaching to the Higher Criticism, and we are emphasising the things that we have tried and proved. The American churches, it has seemed to me, have been still in the throes and they have often furnished messages which were in the highest degree uncertain. They are tired now, I believe, and they want the real thing. On my last visit I found the desire for assurance and reality more pronounced than ever. The man who has got a real live message, with the power of the Holy Spirit inspiring it, and backed up by a consecrated heart and life will be welcomed and listened to in America, more eagerly than ever before. For my own part I never saw crowds so earnest or met with a more ready response in the States. This last summer I have been receiving letters from the cities visited to say the revival is still going on. The influence extended over the whole community, making for sweeter social relations, more consideration between people in the work-a-day world, a kinder community generally. The effect, of course, is not confined to those who come out publicly or talk with the evangelist, or sign decision cards, nor even to those who attend the meetings.

When I look back over past campaigns in America and wonder what to select from such a bewildering mass of material, I think, perhaps, most gratefully of the wonderful meetings I have been privileged to hold in Boston. I shall never forget the scene which occurred there at the close of my sixth campaign in the States in 1907. At the final meeting in the Tremont Temple, the Rev. H. A. Manchester, D. D., stepped forward to the dais holding in his hand a beautiful silver loving cup, having three

handles. Dr. A. Z. Conrad took hold of the cup by the second handle, and I was asked to grasp the third. Representatives of the churches gathered about us and placed their hands on ours, the audience cheering. In presenting the cup to me Dr. Conrad said, "It is filled to overflowing with the true affection of the ministers of Boston." This was the first loving cup ever given to me, and it has been greatly prized. Boston, by the way, is as religious and as responsive as any great city in which I have laboured. It is only fair to say this, as in some sections of America, particularly the Middle States, there prevails the idea that Boston is intellectual, but not spiritual; rational, but without emotion, forever seeking after new gods and never adhering to them long. My experience there has been that the appeal to the heart and the conscience is as effective there as anywhere in the world, and that whatever their culture the people of all classes realise their need of a Saviour, and will crowd to hear the message of Calvary.

Then I recall the stirring incidents that occurred in my American campaign of 1909. To describe them would be like trying to lock up sunbeams in a bird cage. At Pittsburgh 800 churches continued in the attack. The main building in the city was occupied, and the very minister who had suggested a smaller building was unable to get through the doors. Sixty-five policemen were stationed about the building to keep order. They became in a few days my choir in uniform and assisted in pointing out enquirers. It was a joy to hear these officers sing, "Where He Leads Me I Will Follow." Many of them were converted and said they would be better policemen.

During that campaign, I remember, in Kansas City the Mayor forbade an indecent play in the city in response

to the determined protest which I made. The men in my audience shouted, "We'll stop it!" And it was stopped.

At that time I had several offers to stay in America, but none of them tempted me. I was fifty years of age and it was too late for me to change my flag. A Lyceum Company representative made a special trip to Denver to offer me \$20,000 (£5,000) for a series of lectures, but I promptly refused. That, I felt, was not my work and was therefore no temptation.

Never shall I forget the experience I had when in 1918 the Government fetched me from my work in France and sent me on a mission of peace to America. When I got to New York I found the Secret Service there had drawn up a lined and dotted map for my tour. I travelled 50,000 miles and addressed 350 meetings in seven months, telling great audiences of the bravery of our boys across the seas. Everywhere there was the most intense enthusiasm and my story of "the boys" as I had seen them drew demonstrative crowds.

It is often said that our friends the Americans do things on a big scale. Certainly they have big hearts. The energy and enthusiasm they put into revival meetings know no bounds.

The home life of America has always had a great charm for me. I should think that the Americans are the most hospitable people on earth. There is no touch of reserve or suspicion in their kindness. They are eager to serve others, and eager to acknowledge the services of others. As I have said, it is quite a common thing for one of them to go to the minister at the close of a service and say, "Thank you for your sermon. It has done me good." I am sure that if British preachers got more of such encouragement they would preach better. Many a

preacher knows all too well what it is to be frozen to death in the vestry, and expected to perspire in the pulpit!

Over and over again in America I have been asked if I bore the title of Doctor. I invariably replied, "No, thank you. My health as well as my divinity is perfectly sound, so I don't need a doctor!"

During one of my recent visits to America I had the pleasure of meeting the famous cinema stars, the Misses Lillian and Dorothy Gish. I know very little about the cinema world, but I mention this because the sisters impressed me as being modest and unassuming, and wholly in sympathy with the work I was trying to do. When I asked them how they came to be engaged in this career they told me that in their younger days they were scholars in a Methodist Sunday-school, and frequently recited at church entertainments. To see them, so quiet and domesticated, in their home, and to observe their devotion to their mother, who at that time was an invalid, you would never have dreamed they were the heroines of such exciting dramatic films. They told me they were anxious to make a film in which the modern "flapper"—the absurd creature who is eccentric in dress, worships "jazz," smokes cigarettes, and behaves generally in an undignified unwomanly fashion—might see herself as others see her. "She won't read a good book," they said. "She won't hear a sermon. Nobody can preach to her. But she will look at pictures. Perhaps if only we could represent her folly on the screen it might have a good effect upon her."

At the same time I met Mr. D. W. Griffith, the producer of "The Birth of a Nation," "Orphans of the Storm," and other popular films. He was anxious to put on a special exhibition for my benefit. He expressed himself as being heartily in sympathy with my work and said

if I preached again in New York I must be sure and let him know, so that he could attend. "You know," he said, "it is not everybody who thinks so, but I am trying to preach in my own way through the pictures which I am producing."

I could tell hundreds of stories of miracles of grace, culled from my American experiences. Once a man came to a late meeting in Chicago carrying half a brick, which he had wagered he would throw at me. When he knelt with me in prayer he asked God in filthy language to have mercy on him. I never heard a petition like it. There was hardly one clean sentence in it. A list of men who graduated from the Moody Institute was sent me some time afterwards and this man was one.

I remember a man who was converted in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1913. I was holding a meeting in a tabernacle that seated 8,000 people, and it was crammed twice daily. It was a big city, and people came in for miles. One day a man came up to me, a business man, and he said, "Gipsy Smith, I am converted." I said, "When?" He said, "Now to-day, while you have been preaching this noon hour. I have given myself to Christ and I know He saves me." I said, "Are you going back to business?" He said, "No, I can't." I said, "Are you a family man?" "Yes," he said, "I am going home." "Will you tell them about it?" "Oh, no," he said, "I won't talk religion." I said, "Are you converted?" He said, "I know it." I said, "Go home—and keep quiet if you can!"

When he got home, what did he do? What he never did before in his life. He went down in the cellar and chopped all the wood he could find. His wife heard him chopping wood, and his daughter heard him chopping away, and they came and listened at the cellar door, and

the mother said, "What is the matter with your father?" The daughter said, "I don't know."

When he had chopped all the firewood he could find, he filled the buckets with coal, and when he had filled all the buckets with coal he wanted something else to do, and shouted upstairs, "Mary, do you want any potatoes from the barn?" She said, "John, what is the matter?" He said, "I am converted, I am converted!"

A society woman in one of the big American cities attended every one of my meetings. I saw her sitting there night after night, and one night she sat close to me. When the cards of decision were being signed I held the card to her myself and I said, "Won't you sign that for Jesus' sake?" She looked up and her eyes filled with tears and she said, "Yes, yes, I will sign it for Jesus' sake." She did it. And the next morning she called me up on the telephone, and she said, "Can I come and see you?" I said, "Yes." She came. She said in ten days from then she was to have a bridge party at her house. "What am I to do about it? Am I to call it off?" I said, "No, it is too good an opportunity. Don't you call that off," I said; "let them come, give them the best meal that you ever gave at a party in your life, and when you have given them your meal, then tell them of your conversion. I will pray for you." She said, "Good, I will do that."

She came to see me once before the party came off. When I met her in the room I said, "How are you this morning?" She said, "Sky high, they are all coming."

The next morning before I went down to breakfast my phone rang, and when she said, "Do you know who it is?" I said, "Yes, Sky High," and I said, "How are you?" and she said, "Sky higher." She said, "I told those people

Jesus had saved me and the women put their arms around me and said they envied me."

Here is a little story which I heard when in America and which has made an impression wherever I have related it. At a breakfast-table a mother saw her boy handling a pile of notes. She asked him how he came to have so much money. The lad said he won it by gambling on the previous night. The mother pointed out that she was much looked up to in the church, and cried, "You must take all that money back." "Where did you get that ornament on the mantelpiece?" asked the boy. "I won it at a whist-drive," was the reply. "Then send that back," said the son. "It was you who first taught me to play whist and bridge; only I have gone a bit further."

About fourteen years ago I had a unique experience in Baltimore. The crowd outside the building in which we met was so great that the preachers felt as long as they were willing to stand there they should in some way share in the service. So these ministers arranged to take the sermon out in relays! One of them would hear me for five minutes, and then slip out and repeat as much as he could remember to the outside crowd. The experiment was so successful that this novel broadcasting was repeated on successive nights.

In that same winter my meetings in Washington were attended by many of the leading statesmen of America, with their wives and families, and on one Sunday afternoon the British ambassador, Lord Bryce, was present. In Kansas City I spoke for three weeks in the Convention Hall, which seated 18,000 people, to the largest crowds of my life. On the last Sunday night we began exactly two hours early. The great building had been packed so quickly that at the time the service was adver-

tised to begin it was all over, and I was back in my room at the hotel. It is interesting to remember that at the first noonday service in this place 1,500 people were present. Someone took the trouble to keep a record as the numbers increased, and on the last day there were just over 9,000 there at midday.

When I was in San Francisco, Roman Catholicism being strong there, I organised a procession on a Sunday afternoon which made a deep impression. Five thousand men marched silently through the city streets, every one of whom carried a Bible. They were professional men, business men, working men, and their silent witness created quite a stir. The closing scene in that campaign was unique. My little platform was decorated with all the flowers the people had heard me mention during the services, the dainty little primrose, of course, being conspicuous. When I was called upon by the chairman to make my farewell speech it was the signal for the most remarkable floral tribute I have ever seen. Choir and audience pelted me with bunches of violets. This was the prevailing flower in the San Francisco gardens at that time, and when the shower was over I stood knee deep in violets.

This reminds me that from San Francisco I went on to Los Angeles, and there an incident occurred that was truly remarkable. One night in the enquiry room when the converts rose from their knees, three people recognised each other. They were a husband and wife who had been divorced, and the woman who had been the cause of the separation. Neither knew that the other was present in that room until they rose from prayer. The husband went across to the wife from whom he had been divorced, and pleaded for forgiveness, publicly confessing his fault.

Then he spoke to the other woman he had wronged. What passed between them only the angels would know, but the three people left that room together with a new power in their lives, leaving us all filled with wonder at the Gospel which could work such miracles in human lives.

I must add a few words about my experiences among the coloured folk. When the coloured folk get religion, they get it in their feet, in their hands—all over. You should hear them sing "I'll Meet You at the Station When the Train Comes Along." When they sang "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," I almost thought I could see it coming. I often tell stories of old Jasper, one of the greatest coloured men America has produced. He was a slave, and he sat at the table with other men stripping tobacco. His soul was under conviction of sin, and he had been sleepless about it for six weeks. Suddenly, while at work, he cried to God for deliverance, and the burden rolled away. "I mustn't make a noise till dinner time," he said, but he suddenly saw Aunt Dinah, who had been praying for him, and he whispered in her ear, "De Lord has set my soul at liberty!" But the whisper could be heard right across the river. Out came the overseer, "What's all dis noise?" "Didn't mean to make no noise," said Jasper, "but de first taste ob Salvation got de better ob me!"

Then out came the master from his office. "What's the matter?" "It's only John Jasper," said the overseer. "He says he's done gone got religion." "Is it true?" said the master. "Come into the office and tell me all about it." John told him. "Well," said the master, "your Saviour is my Saviour too!" That did it! Jasper said, "De hol-lerin' straps ob Jasper's breeching am just broke!" He had to glue his lips to the wall to keep it in!

"When you stop doubting, you start shouting," old

John Jasper used to say. He had his own decided views. For example, it was Jasper who preached the great sermon entitled, "The Sun *Do* Move." The scientists, he said, had been declaring that the sun did not move. He would prove it did. Joshua looked at the sun and said, "If only it would stop there a bit longer, I could hold on and get the victory." The Lord said, "Very well, Joshua, command the sun to stand still." And didn't that prove the sun had been moving? asked Jasper triumphantly. In another sermon he said the scientists declared that the earth was round, but the Lord called for a breath to come from the four corners of the earth, and how could anything be round that had four corners?

One day he preached about heaven. One of his audience said, "His oration was beyond words. We all thought it was a climax, when suddenly he paused and said: 'Bred'ren, I just done gone and clean forgot the host of the Apostles! We will just have a look at them befo' we closes—and on the way to the host of the Apostles we will turn round the little street corner and see the little cottage where the Lord sot my mother up as housekeeper when she went to glory. I shall know it as soon as I see it by the roses on the porch.' "

Do you not think that was lovely?

During the war a coloured draft was leaving a certain town in America. One fine big black man was overheard to say to his best girl, "Say, honey, yo' goin' to write to your honey boy?" "Yo' bet your life I is," she replied, "but, hold on!—how shall I know where to write to?" The darkie pulled himself up proudly, and said, "Just yo' write me, *Care of General Pershing, Berlin, France*, 'cause I sure is goin' dar!"

On one of my trips to America I took my wife and

daughter to a church which was crowded by coloured people. As soon as we entered they began to sing "Let Us Cheer De Weary Traveller." After the chorus was finished, a dear old sister who must have been about eighty years old stood up, leaning on her stick, and in a very quavering voice sang, on her own:

"Sometimes I gets discouraged,  
And thinks my work is vain,  
And den de Holy Spirit  
Revives my soul again.

"Let us cheer the lonely traveller  
Along de heavenly road."

After some more singing I was introduced, and talked to them. Next morning when I came down to breakfast at the hotel, the porter—as black as ebony—was waiting for me. "Mo'nin', sah, mo'nin', sah, mo'nin', mo'nin'!" he said. "Yo' was was down at our chu'ch last night, sah!" "Oh," I said, "is that your church?" "Why, sah," said he, "I's de treasurer down dere. I been treasurer ob dat chu'ch twenty-five years. My! Yo' did make a expression on my wife,—and yo' know, sah, anybody dat makes a expression on my wife makes a expression on me." "Good!" I said, "I'm glad to hear it." "Yes, sah," said the porter. "Yo' ought to be dere to hear *our* preacher. Last Sunday being de Sunday befo' Good Friday, he buried de Lord. But nex' Sunday mo'nin' *he's a goin' to rose Him!*"

I remember a service in which three thousand converts were admitted by ticket. I said, "I want to know how many of those present have been born here during the

past month. Up jumped a coloured brother. "Well, sah," he cried, "I can't 'xactly say I was born here, but I have done a *power o' growin'.*"

In my last great mission at Nashville I got the white people of the city to agree to let me preach to the coloured folk. I had the latter all the five weeks in a section reserved for them, and oh, how they sang the chorus:

"I'm bound for the Promised Land!"

The most remarkable service of all was a special service for coloured folk. It was in truth a revival of the old-time religion of camp meeting days. Nearly 6,000 coloured people were present. Two hundred students in the Jubilee Chorus from Fisk University sang negro folk songs. One song, "It's Me," met with a roar of applause. "Not my mother nor my brother, but it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer," sang a soloist. "It ain't Gipsy, but it's me, O Lord," began another verse. Then I sang, "It ain't the coloured folk, but it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer." Throughout the service, unrestrained by convention, the coloured people gave free vent to their emotions. "Glory be to God! The Lord just makes us holler!" cried one. In the middle of my sermon I started to sing, "I'll meet you at the station when the train comes along." Voice after voice chimed in until the song became a jubilant clamour. The coloured people took their handkerchiefs from their pockets and waved them, rocking in their seats as they sang.

Just before I went to preach to these coloured folk, I had lunch with the leader of the choir, and he happened to say, "Mr. Smith, what colour do you think we shall be in Heaven?" "I have never thought of that," I replied.

"After all, there are more coloured people than white people in the world." After a moment I added, "Anyway, whatever colour we are, *we shall be like Him.*" When I got to the meeting I thought I would mention this conversation. When I said, "We shall all be like Him," an old coloured grannie in the front row, without a tooth in her head, shouted, "Honey, yo' shut yo' mouf, yo' ought to be in Heaven now!"

When I was speaking I said, "Am I speaking the truth?" "Yes, yo' is telling de truth. Praise His Holy Name for such a man!" cried an old coloured woman.

The fact is, these coloured people have got religion that masters them, and we too often have just enough to master. In an Omaha meeting I looked at the section in which the coloured people sat, and I said, "Do you know anything of what I am describing?" and one dear old auntie said, "Aye, and I'll tell the world, I'll tell the world."

Here is a lovely incident. An old coloured mammy had five dollars she wanted to give me, so she got one of her white friends to write me a letter. I give it just as it was dictated :

"Dear Brother Gipsy,

"I's jes a po' ole cullahed 'oman whut herd yo' preach dem two Fridays. I's one o' dem dat was so happy when yo' tole us 'bout Jesus and dat we gwine ter be like Him when we rise and shine on dat mornin'.

"Jesus, sweet Jesus, long time ago tuck away my stony heart, an' I be gwine on rejoicin' in Him for fifty years. An' cause I know yo's de chosen ob de Lord an' has done so much for us cullahed folks here, I wants yo' to come back and make it a Heabenly place for us to live in. Since yo' done come eben de street car mens is better to us. . . . I

pray God to gib yo' resomlution lak He did in de days of old and strengt' to go on preachin' His word to lost sinners.

"Good by, Brother Gipsy, I's so glad yo' told us we was brothers and sisters an' jint heirs. I want yo' to come back. I mebbe done put on my long white robe an' jine de Heabenly choir fo' yo' does, but I wants yo' to come. Lak I tole yo' at de meetin', I got a thru ticket when I started Heabenwards, an' I'll meet yo' at de station when de train rolls in."

The lady to whom this letter was dictated wrote, "This is truly a gift of unselfish love. With the simple faith of a little child, the dear old black mammy sent for me to come clear across the city to write you this letter and give you five dollars. She does not want her name used. She says, 'God knows, and dat's enough.' "

Some very remarkable reports of my meetings for coloured people appeared in the American press. Perhaps the most original was a series that appeared in a Nashville daily during my last visit. Readers of our own newspapers would open their eyes if they saw this sort of thing in *The Daily News*. I will give one of the daily reports in the curious form in which it appeared:

### YE GIPSYE EVANGELISTE

IF ANYBODY in Nashville  
EVER HAD the idea that  
THERE WAS any barrier of  
CREED OR color or breed or  
BIRTH BETWEEN the white  
CITIZEN AND the colored  
CITIZENS of this town  
THEY'VE SURE got another  
GUESS COMING, because it was  
PROVED at the auditorium  
FRIDAY that the two races  
DIDN'T NEED any protection  
AGAINST EACH other here,  
BECAUSE THEY are both  
JUST TRYING to make this  
CITY A PLACE where every  
CHILD CAN have a chance

TO LIVE and love and grow  
INTO SAFE citizenship, and  
THEY TOLD each other so  
FRIDAY WHEN Gipsy Smith held  
A SPECIAL service for colored  
PEOPLE AND the house was  
PACKED TO overflowing and  
THEY CAME in style too, in  
TAXIS AND limousines and  
AUTOMOBILES AND Fords placed  
AT THEIR disposal by white  
FRIENDS, AND that was a  
PROUD, AND happy day for  
NASHVILLE AND the memory of  
IT WILL linger long in  
THE MINDS and hearts of  
THOSE WHO heard the sweet

VOICES OF our colored  
 FRIENDS AS they sang  
 THEIR SPIRITUALS and the  
 FAMILIAR HYMNS of Zion,  
 AND GIPSY preached to  
 THEM THE same gospel which  
 IS CAPTURING this city for  
 CHRIST AND when the Jubilee  
 SINGERS WHO are Nashville's  
 PRIDE SANG "Brother don't  
 STAY AWAY there's room  
 ENOUGH FOR us all," it set  
 THE NOTE of the whole  
 SERVICE AND everybody was  
 GLAD THAT there was room  
 FOR ALL because heaven  
 WOULDN'T BE satisfactory  
 TO NASHVILLE folks unless  
 THE FISK Jubilee Singers were  
 THERE OCCUPYING a prominent  
 POSITION in the choir; and  
 ANYHOW GIPSY couldn't get  
 ENOUGH OF it because after  
 THEY HAD sung "I ain't going  
 TO STUDY war no more" he  
 SHOUTED "PUT on your long  
 WHITE ROBE by the riverside  
 AGAIN PLEASE" and Myrtle  
 WIGGINS' LOVELY lyric  
 SOPRANO SOARED and sang its  
 WAY INTO every soul there  
 AND WHEN they sang "It's  
 ME, O LORD, standing in the  
 NEED OF prayer" and had run  
 THROUGH THE verses saying  
 IT AIN'T my mother; it ain't  
 MY BROTHER and other  
 MEMBERS OF the family and  
 FRIENDS THEY sang "It ain't  
 GIPSY, BUT it's me, O Lord,  
 STANDING IN the need of  
 PRAYER" AND Gipsy was on his  
 FEET in an instant singing  
 "IT AIN'T the colored people  
 BUT IT'S me, O Lord," and  
 HANDED IT back to them just  
 LIKE THAT, and right there  
 GIPSY SOLD himself and his

GOSPEL MESSAGE to the  
 COLORED FOLKS of Nashville  
 AND IT was their meeting  
 AND THEY sang and shouted  
 AND GOT happy ad lib  
 GIPSY TOLD them that they  
 COULD GO right ahead and  
 SHOUT ALL they wanted to  
 BECAUSE A shouter never  
 WAS A doubter, and that when  
 A MAN STOPPED doubting he  
 STARTED SHOUTING, and believe  
 ME, ACCORDING to that, there  
 AREN'T MANY doubters in  
 NASHVILLE AMONG the colored  
 FRATERNITY AT least, and one  
 DEAR OLD mammy called out  
 THAT WHEN you got the spirit  
 YOU JUST "had to holler" and  
 THE GIPSY just opened his  
 HEART TO them and talked  
 TO THEM about the things  
 OF THE SPIRIT and how the  
 SPIRIT OF Christ would reveal  
 HIMSELF TO them in every  
 DETAIL OF their lives and  
 WOULD HELP them in whatever  
 STATION GOD had placed them  
 AND THE love of Christ would  
 MAKE THEM kinder, more patient,  
 MORE FAITHFUL, and would help  
 THEM RULE their tempers and  
 KEEP THEIR homes neat and  
 AT LAST would make them  
 FREE MEN and women in  
 CHRIST JESUS, and right there  
 GIPSY BEGAN to sing and in  
 A MINUTE five thousand sweet  
 SOUTHERN VOICES were singing  
 WITH HIM, "I'll meet you at  
 THE STATION when the train  
 COMES ALONG" and what  
 WITH THE few white folks  
 THERE THINKING black and the  
 CROWD OF black folks acting  
 WHITE EVERYBODY got mighty  
 HAPPY!

Once I had the privilege of attending a church where only coloured folk went. That afternoon an old coloured man, in opening the service, prayed a prayer that I shall ever remember. "Oh God, bless my congregation," he said, "they are dressed well dis afternoon; help them to remember that when de collection am made!"

I remember one old coloured man who had been a slave. When he was introduced to me he said, "My young brudder, I loves de Lord too, and let me tell you dis: when nex' yo' preaches just yo' give de people what dey need, not what dey axes for!"

I once met the well-known negress preacher, Amanda Smith. When I was speaking at Ocean Grove she repeatedly cried, "That hits the bull's eye, Brother Smith!"

I remember another coloured sister who once sat by my wife on the platform. She did not know Mrs. Smith, and turning to her she remarked, "I've taken a fancy to that young man, and I think of getting him come along with me conducting missions among my people. We should get on very well together." My wife much amused remarked, "I happen to know him pretty well; he is my husband." "That so?" said the coloured lady unabashed, "well, he's no worse for that. He's all right and so are you!"

When I am writing of coloured folk I think, of course, of those I saw during my tour in South Africa. When I began my work in Cape Town there was some discussion as to whether it would be wise to expect the coloured people to attend the mission in the ordinary way with the white people. It was suggested to me that the two would not mix and I ought to reserve two nights of the mission for coloured people only. I resented this and replied, that if I gave eighteen nights to the white man and only two to the coloured it would draw a line and create a feeling that ought not to exist in connection with the preaching of the Gospel. I was told that I did not appreciate the situation as the local ministers did, so I said I would agree under protest to their agreement. As soon as it was made known coloured Christians naturally began to

ask, "Is there one God for the whites and another for the blacks? Why should we be shut out of the mission?" In reply to such correspondence in the local press I said so far as I was concerned the door would be open to all and I should be delighted to see my coloured brethren. The result was that they came in crowds, and four hundred out of the three thousand who passed through the enquiry room in that first mission were coloured people. Afterwards there was no more discussion as to the mixing of the races. We realised that black and white are made one in Christ Jesus.

When I went to Kimberley—travelling in the carriage in which Mr. Joseph Chamberlain had ridden with Lord Milner—I was taken to see the compound where about 2,000 Kaffirs were kept. An impromptu service was arranged, and it was wonderful to hear six or seven hundred natives singing a familiar hymn in their own language. My daughter and I sang "Count Your Blessings," and if they could not understand the words, they seemed to appreciate the song. I spoke to them through one of their number who could interpret, and they listened with eyes, mouth and ears all open. Later on I remember I visited Edendale, a native mission station near Maritzburg where I was welcomed by native ministers, two native chiefs, and four or five hundred of the Christian natives. It was an inexpressible joy to talk to them; they were like a lot of big wide-eyed children.

I heard a story of one boy who worked for a man who was at times afflicted with a very bad temper. My friend said to this boy one day, "Well, Sam, how is your boss?" The boy replied, "He got plenty debil, boss, that's how he am." After a time my friend met the boy again, and asked, "How is your boss now, Sam?" "Ah," said Sam,

grinning, "he better ; he got piccaninny debil now, boss." My friend spoke of another boy who had been converted and asked, "Is he a good boy, Sam?" "Well," replied Sam cautiously, "He talk mighty good but you know, boss, I can't see inside."

A native woman in Maritzburg, who had four children, sent me a letter in which she mentioned her conversion and said, "We have such a happy home since the mission—praise the Lord! I send you two pounds for you when you get home to buy Bibles and give them to poor little gipsy children in your country who have no Bibles. Tell them they were sent by a coloured woman in South Africa who was converted by Gipsy Smith, the evangelist, and who feels she owes a debt to other Gipsies, and would like to pay it back in this way."

## CHAPTER XIV

### A NOTE ON PROHIBITION.—A MEMORABLE SCENE AT ST. LOUIS.

WHILE I am writing of America, perhaps a few words here regarding Prohibition may be of interest. Long ago, when I first went to America, I discovered that the Americans were not satisfied with ordinary temperance propaganda. They had scientific teaching by experts in their schools regarding the injurious effects of alcohol. This went on for many years. The boys and girls growing up became abstainers, and when the boys came to manhood they voted against the liquor. Many people in England do not yet fully appreciate the fact that before Prohibition became law an overwhelming majority of the States in the Union had voted dry. Prohibition was not forced on America. America voted for it.

When America came into the War the Cabinet at Washington decided that soldiers and sailors would be more efficient without alcohol, so it was prohibited in the army and navy. Further, they decided that there should be no saloon within ten miles of any barracks or encampment. During the War they discovered that what was good for soldiers and sailors was good for everybody. Now there are a hundred and ten millions of people in America, and there is not a saloon from the Atlantic to the Pacific that dares to sell drink openly. There is not a hotel in America that dares to put it on the table. Liquor can be bought,

I know, but it has to be bought on the sly. Of course, there are "boot-leggers," but there are people to be found everywhere who would hold a candle for the devil while he is shaving if they could get anything out of it. I simply give my own experience.

Not long ago I worked in six of the biggest American cities. In each case I was the guest of clubs that met in the city—the Chamber of Commerce, the Rotary, and so on. I met in one club as many as six hundred of the leading business men of the city, financiers, professional men, manufacturers. I said to the president and vice president who sat by me, "Gentlemen, what are you going to do about Prohibition?" The answer was, "We shall vote for it, in the first place, on the ground of efficiency; in the second place, on the ground of output." There is no doubt whatever that unless England puts her foot on this evil she will lose her place in the commercial race.

I know liquor has been smuggled into America. The Britishers are among the worst sinners. We must blame the right people. Just before I left New York last year an aeroplane came down ten miles out of the city. The pilot and the observer were uninjured, and "scooted," leaving an aeroplane loaded with whiskey. Where had it come from? Canada? There is no doubt that whiskey distillers in our country have been shipping the stuff to Canada, and that it has been smuggled across the border or taken round the coast.

I believe, however, America having gone dry, will remain dry. For one thing the churches are behind Prohibition, and they represent a tremendous social and spiritual force. I have never known a minister in America who was not a teetotaler. There was not a church in America before Prohibition that would allow a man to

hold office if he was associated in any way with the trade. There never has been a barmaid in America. If there were fewer barmaids in our own country I think there would be less drinking. In America if a man was in the trade Society ostracised him. The saloon was looked upon as the home of the crime maker, bribe taker, and law breaker. I do not say it was a right thing to do, but girls at school who were the daughters of brewers were almost boycotted by the other girls, who would not associate with them. How different it has been in this country, where we have bestowed honours upon the men who fattened on the blood and bones of their neighbours, and have made "peers"—through the bung-hole of a barrel!

When I first went to America, one of the questions put to me was, "What do you think of our ladies as compared with your English ladies?" Being pressed for an answer I at once replied, "Well, your ladies are very nice, but they have less colour than ours." My questioner instantly replied, "*Our* ladies don't drink." I felt very humiliated.

There is no doubt whatever it is Prohibition that the Trade is afraid of in England just now. I am reminded of an amusing incident. I had to travel from Euston to Manchester some time ago. Just as the train was starting five men came into the carriage where I was sitting. By the time we reached Willesden Junction I knew these men were from Manchester, that they were publicans, and that they had been to a trade exhibition. They knew me and tried for a long time to attract my attention. They were five to one, so I kept behind my paper, doing little reading, but a good deal of concentration. At last when we reached Rugby, one of the men said, "Mornin,'

Mr. Smith." I said, "Oh, you know me, do you?" "Yes," he said, "You're an old'un! You're not a Gipsy for nothing. You know a thing or two, you do! Going about the country dressed like a lord and living on the fat of the land. You're a knowing 'un!" I said, "Do you think I am making a good thing out of preaching the Gospel?" "Why, yes," they said, "O'course you are." "Very well," I said, "You have the same chance, if only you have the same sense." One of the men got angry and said, "Look here, your party's going to the wall." "Yes," I said, "It's your wall and when we get to it, it'll go down." "Well," he said, "If you and Collier go on as you are doing in Manchester all us respectable publicans will have to go into the Union." "Ah," I said, "and when you go in, all the other poor souls in there can come out."

Prohibition in Great Britain is only a matter of time. Meanwhile, every man can have it at once if he wants it. He has only to write on the upper lip, "No admission!"

The "Trade" may squeal, and rave about "liberty" and "freedom," but all their desperate efforts to stem the tide will be in vain. I am reminded of one of the strangest and most exciting experiences of my life. It was at St. Louis, during my campaign of 1909. The liquor sellers knew well that in me they had an inveterate opponent. One night I had been preaching for about fifteen minutes, when I saw about a dozen rough-looking men coming in at the doors and scattering among the audience. In less time than it takes me to write it, they had cried "Fire!" Instantly about 13,000 people were on their feet screaming. I turned to the choir and began to sing, "Where He Leads Me I Will Follow." There were about a thousand in the choir, and they sang

without a moment's hesitation, the result being that the frightened audience was steadied, and I was able to remind them that the building was of concrete and steel, and had been so designed that it was practically fire-proof. The audience settled down and we had a grand meeting.

I discovered next day that the wicked scheme had been deliberately planned with the object of upsetting the Mission. It appeared the friends of the liquor interest had had a meeting in which they discussed the best ways and means of counteracting the influence of Gipsy Smith's campaign. When this was known, it may be imagined how we gained the sympathy of hundreds who would otherwise have paid no attention to the Mission. It was reported that the receipts of the saloons for the next two weeks were \$100,000 less than in the fortnight preceding the meetings. The feeling that pervaded the city was, if the liquor interest would lead men to risk the lives of thousands of people in that way, there must be pretty good reasons for attacking it.

I know I am not welcome everywhere. In South Africa, the proprietors of theatres and beer shops vied with each other in abusing me. I was called "The King of Bunkum" and "The biggest humbug that ever came to South Africa." On a large poster near where I stayed, someone wrote in large letters, "Keep away from this bloke, he is dangerous!" I took all this, of course, as a great compliment.

I do not wish to write anything unfair or extravagant. I know quite well that many publicans are honest, kindly men, especially the innkeepers in country districts, where the evils of the traffic are not so obvious, perhaps, as they are in the crowded city. Only the other day when I was on a motor tour in Leicestershire a village publican

was one of the most enthusiastic supporters of my meetings, coming forward voluntarily with the request that he might be allowed to sell tea-tickets! Many of these men are better than their trade. It is the evil thing itself I attack, not any man who, from various circumstances, may find himself in a business which at heart he detests and which he himself longs to reform.

I have often told the story of a friend of mine who was gloriously converted, and who at once began to fight the drink trade. She heard that at the Brewster Sessions a new license was being asked for in her locality. Off she went to the court. Evidence in favour of the application was heard, and the opponents of the license were asked to state their case. "May I oppose it?" asked my friend. "Certainly, madam," said the Chairman of the Licensing Bench, "you can give us your reasons." "Well," said the woman, going into the witness box, "I have six good reasons." "Very well, what are they?" "They are my six dear boys," said the mother emphatically. "You gentlemen who can afford to do so take good care to live away from the beer shops. I claim the same right for my lads, whom I want to be good, clean, strong men." There was applause in court. The license was not granted.

Not long ago the body of a well-dressed young man was found floating in the Mersey. In his pocket was a scrap of paper on which he had written: "Make no enquiry about me. Let me rot. Drink has ruined me." When his body was taken to the mortuary for identification how many British mothers came to see if they could recognize their own missing boy? Nearly two hundred! When one hears the cry of the little children, the cry of young wives, the cry of heart-broken mothers, how can any

decent man fail to say, I will fight this evil thing with every ounce of strength I have?

Whatever law is passed or proposed and obstructed, every one may begin by closing the little saloon beneath his own nose. I thank God I am a lifelong teetotaller, if only for the sake of the children. Have you ever heard this one dreadful fact? I have seen it estimated that there are 80,000 fallen women in London—somebody's sisters, somebody's daughters. Doctors tell me that the average length of the terrible life they live is ten years. Ten years—and the 80,000 will be gone, and the drink will have supplied another 80,000 to take their place! Is not this a thing the churches should fight to the death?

## CHAPTER XV

HAPPY MEMORIES FROM MANY QUARTERS.—  
AUSTRALIA.—SOUTH AFRICA.—PARIS.—SOME  
TROPHIES OF GRACE.

IT hardly seems possible that it is thirty years since I took a tour round the world, spending three months in Australia, and returning by way of America. There were some great meetings in Adelaide, Ballarat, Melbourne and Sidney. In the latter city I spoke in the Centenary Hall, into which 3,000 people crowded. When I was at Adelaide, I visited the prison and preached and sang to the convicts, who appeared to be deeply moved. My visit to Australia was curtailed by the serious illness of my wife, but everywhere I went I saw that there were wonderful openings in this country for evangelistic work. In Australia the evangelist is constantly coming into contact with men who have gone out from the motherland to make a new start in life, men who are homesick and very susceptible to the gospel message, tenderly and lovingly delivered. Looking back upon this tour I remember with gratitude in connection with my work in Adelaide the unfailing sympathy and support of Chief Justice Way. He presided at a meeting at which I told the story of my life, and at which £100 was given for the Children's Hospital. For five years two of the cots in that hospital were named after me.

Of my mission in South Africa in 1904 I have the

happiest memories. I was accompanied on that by my wife and daughter. In Cape Town, the Orange River Colony, Transvaal and Natal, we were received by enthusiastic crowds. Everywhere the mission was the all absorbing topic. Our songs caught on, and comic songs gave way to "Count your blessings," which was whistled by men, hummed by boys, and sung by the women all day long. From one end of South Africa to the other it was agreed that the country had never been so stirred. The work among the young people was extraordinarily successful.

The churches in South Africa rose to the occasion magnificently. No building was large enough to accommodate the crowds. The railway company in Cape Town put on ten specials every night of the mission, to carry away the people. The theatres were practically emptied, and admission prices were reduced. A prominent wine and spirit merchant said, "Unless you send Gipsy Smith to England, I shall have to reduce my staff. Every day for the past week some people have been saying, 'Take my name off your books, for I have got converted and don't want any more wines!'"

I carefully avoided, of course, all controversies of a political character, and tried to pour oil on troubled waters. The most wonderful part of this mission was, perhaps, seen amongst the Dutch. The Dutch ministers had been invited to take part in the mission, but at first they would have nothing to do with an Englishman. And they refused to lend their big church building. Still the Dutch held far apart. The first minister to call on me, my wife and daughter was Professor Hofmeyer of the Theological Seminary, a dear old father of the Dutch Church. I visited the Seminary and was invited by the

Professor to address the students. The anti-British feeling was strong and I was the first one to have been so honoured since the war.

Before the mission was over I found an entry into the Dutch heart. In all several thousands of the Dutch passed through the Enquiry Room—450 of them in Cape Town alone. Dutchmen and Englishmen who had fought in the war were seen leading each other to Christ. English and Boer ministers came to me with their arms round each other's necks, saying, "We are friends once more." A good Boer mother said to me one day, "Our hearts have been so torn, but you have brought us peace."

The last meeting of the mission at Johannesburg was a thanksgiving meeting. A Boer minister was invited to say something on behalf of the Dutch. At his request 1,100 rose, testifying thereby that under God they owed their conversion to the mission. They sang a psalm in Dutch, and the whole audience was visibly affected. Some of the Dutch had trekked 200 miles in order to be present. I also recall some splendid young people's meetings. At one, nearly 300 boys and girls, whose fathers slept beneath the veldt, sang a Dutch translation of "Count your blessings."

When I asked them if they loved me, each one raised the left hand. When I asked "Why the left hand?" they replied, "It's nearest the heart, sir." Remember these children had been made orphans by British guns. The Cross kills all envy and malice, and makes men and nations love each other.

The number of people who attended the meetings during this South African campaign was over 300,000, and nearly 20,000 were personally dealt with. I remember that when a great farewell demonstration took place a

prominent hotel keeper in East London said, "So Gipsy Smith has gone? Well, there's a good many people waiting below to tar and feather him." A ministerial friend relating this added, "Mr. Smith will get his feathers above, where they are awaiting him."

Once when I was conducting a mission in the west of England, I was in a railway train one Saturday evening, sitting in a corner, crouched behind a newspaper, and the people in the coach did not recognise me as the evangelist whose mission in the neighbourhood they were all discussing. Some talked for me and some against me. I knew better than to be hurt or offended by criticism. It was good for me.

There was a dear old granny with a basket of groceries on her knees. She was a farmer's wife. When the others had finished their conversation she said, "Well folks, you can say what you will about Gipsy Smith, but I pray for him every day of my life. I have never seen him, and I love him with a mother's love. You know my grandson John. He went off to South Africa and it broke his mother's heart. She died. For seven years we never heard from him. At last he wrote home and said, 'Gipsy Smith was in Johannesburg and I went to hear him and gave my heart to God. I told the whole crowd, "Don't save all the flowers for your mother's funeral. Put some of them in her hands when she is living." So granny I'm coming home to put some flowers in your hand!' That lad came home, and became a local preacher. We are all proud of our John and if I am anywhere near Gipsy Smith when he dies I would like to write on his coffin, *A friend of sinners.*"

I have already described some of my unforgettable experience in France, but before the war I had the privilege

of paying two visits to Paris for the purpose of conducting evangelistic missions.

One of my outstanding memories is an incident that occurred during my first visit.

A lady who was one of the belles of Paris was converted in one of my meetings. When she came up to me she was decked with diamonds and pearls and she looked as if she had just stepped out of a fashion plate. Yet she shook like a tired bird in a storm. She said, "I could have my box at the opera, I could have my automobile, my fashionable friends, but I am weary of them all, they are so unsatisfying. All of it is unsatisfying, I want Jesus." I said, "Madam, let us kneel and pray." When the soul gets to the point of just being tired of everything else in the world, just hungry for Jesus, it is not long in finding Him, and she found Him.

Twelve months afterwards I returned to Paris. On my first visit the people to the number of sixteen or eighteen hundred had gathered to meet me—the cultured class who had been taught English in the school-rooms and the nurseries, and who understood me. Just before my next visit I received a letter from the lady of the year before in which she said, "Gipsy Smith, you must come to my house the first day you are in Paris. I want you to meet twenty-five of the Protestant pastors of France." I remember that when I was first there these pastors, many of whom were rationalists and unitarians, had no use for my message, and would not lend me their churches, so I wrote back, "They would not meet me before, and they may not meet me this time." The lady replied, "I am going to invite them to my *home* for lunch. They will not refuse my invitation to meet you. My social standing will demand a reply and they won't refuse, for fear they may

get no more invitations. My home is strategic. I will make my social standing tell for Christ." So I said, "Go ahead."

When I got to the house there were the twenty-five Protestant pastors there with their wives. As soon as lunch was over my friend had a little Frenchman who was an earnest Christian and who understood English very well. He put his back against the wall, and put questions to me, interpreting my answers. There was a discussion for about two hours on the place which the cross occupied in my ministry and you may be sure I tried to put it where it ought to be. When I looked at my watch and said, "I am due at my meeting," these pastors said, "Oh, we must have more," and my hostess said promptly, "Ten o'clock next Friday." So on the following Friday, instead of having twenty-five we had seventy, and we had among them a revival which the devotion of this one influential lady had made possible.

I remember one French lady in a Paris mission who said, "I have not understood a word the man has said, but I feel he has something I want."

I have seen hundreds of miracles of Grace that could never be put on paper. There are some stories that only the angels could tell. I received a letter not long ago from a woman who said her husband, a fugitive from justice, was walking down Kingsway, in London, last January when someone gave him an invitation to my mission at Kingsway Hall. In a cynical and hardened mood he went in. The message arrested him. He left the hall determined to give himself up, and as a result he was brought before the magistrate and sentenced to nine months' imprisonment. As soon as I got back to London I hurried to Pentonville gaol and saw that man. With a

warder standing by, I knelt in prayer with him. When we rose he said to me, "They would never have found me, and I should never have got here but for your message, but I know I did right to confess, and I am trusting in God to help me."

At Sheffield one night a young man came into the enquiry room after my sermon on "stripe washing" and said he had decided he must give himself up to justice. Some time before he had stolen some jewelery and a warrant was out for his arrest. "They could never find me," he said, "but now I feel I must make restitution, and I am quite ready to suffer any punishment."

It so happened that a much respected officer of the Sheffield Police Force, a member of that fine body the Christian Police Association, was one of the enquiry room workers in that mission. So this man was taken to Detective——. The latter, having heard the story, said, "We will pray together, and then I will make enquiries." After prayer, the officer telephoned to the police station. It was then discovered that the warrant had expired. The man, however, said he was determined to make complete reparation. Some time afterwards I was revisiting Sheffield, and when speaking in the same hall I saw the man in a front seat, smiling happily. I told the story, and called upon him to rise so that the audience might see he stood firm, and he did so amid loud applause, saying, "I'm sticking it, sir!"

I tried to preach my sermon entitled "The Lost Christ" at the Winona Park conference in America. That night the people did not go to bed. Hundreds were praying in little groups all over the camp.

The next morning I found a note under my door. I opened it and it read: "Dear Gipsy Smith, I heard your

sermon on 'The Lost Christ' last night. I am a preacher, the pastor of the largest church, with the largest congregation and with the greatest influence in the city in which I live. The biggest men of that city are members of my church. But I am in distress. I had lost my Christ. I promise you and my church and God I will never preach again until I have found Him."

I think of a glorious fellow, a fine business man, whom I knew some years ago. He was just making his way in the world. He had a wife and four lovely children—three boys and a baby girl—and he gave himself to Christ. He went home earlier than usual. He had been in the habit of spending his evenings at the club. His wife was not expecting him. She was going the last round with the children, kissing them and tucking them in as all good mothers do, and she heard his steps downstairs. She looked over the bannisters and said: "Is that you, Fred?" He said, "Yes," with some of the old-time soul in his voice.

She said to me afterward: "You know, Gipsy, I had not heard that tone for a long time. I had missed it, but I knew it the moment I heard it. I just leaped downstairs to him. He was hanging up his coat, and I followed him in the room and he was weeping and I looked at him and said, 'Fred, what is the matter? Have you had bad news?' 'No.' 'Is there something the matter with the business?' 'No.' Then I went closer to him, and put my hands on his shoulders, and said to him: 'I am your wife and the mother of your children. I gave you my love, the dearest thing a woman has to give. You have it still. I love you with all my soul, Fred. What is the trouble? You seem troubled. Tell me whatever it is. You can depend on me to the last. I will never go back on you.

I will never betray you. Your sorrow is mine. I have shared your joys, tell me your sorrows. I am braver than you think.' He looked at me and said, 'Emma, you won't love me less if I tell you?' I said, 'No.' 'You won't think me less a man if I tell you?' I said, 'No.' He said, 'I have been down to the meeting and have heard that man preach, and he told me my duty to you and the children and the home, and I have given my heart to Jesus, and I want you to help me.' I said, 'Fred, since you married me I have been secretly praying for this, and if you will let me, the children are all asleep, but I will go and wake them and bring them down here, and we will pray together. We will begin as we mean to go on.' "

I had breakfast with the happy couple some mornings afterwards, and Fred repeated the story. It was good to see the glory on his face. Written all around that home in golden capitals were the words, "This day is Salvation come to this home."

When in America once, I was talking in St. Paul to a crowd of men. I was illustrating my message with the parable about sowing and reaping. The harvest, I pointed out, is bound to come, and "You will reap as you sow." As I was entering my hotel afterwards a gentleman laid his hand on my shoulder. He had been present at my service. His hand was shaking and tears were streaming down his face. "Gipsy Smith," he said, "I am one of the leading business men in this city. I am looked upon as a successful business man. When I was young I went the pace, and I tested sin in its most fascinating forms. I have two beautiful daughters. If you saw them driving out, you would agree as to their beauty. They are said to be two of the most handsome girls in this city. But

they are both totally blind. It is the result of my sin. I see now it is true that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

One Saturday night at Hanley more than forty years ago, I was going home from a temperance meeting when I saw two men fighting in the middle of the street. They were stripped to the waist. They were father and son. I was only a boy of twenty-two, but I stepped in between them and said, "Stop this!" I said to the younger man, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself. What right have you to strike your father? Let him lick you if he wants to do so."

We Gipsies are too well-trained to do anything like that. I never dared to give my father a back answer in my life. I went with them to their house. There were traces of the fight on them, and some of the blood got on me. I said, "We must pray," and we knelt down on the brick floor of the little house. When we rose the younger man said, "I'm through. I'll never touch the stuff again." I said, "I shall be here in the morning to take you to church." On the Sunday morning both men were ready. The whole family was converted. And the other day, when I was holding a mission at Hanley I saw the son sitting there with his wife and when I thought of how he had stood firm all the forty years my heart rejoiced. That one thing seemed to make it worth while to go to Hanley.

When from the age of twenty-two to twenty-six I was preaching at Hanley to one of the biggest congregations, outside London, in this country, there was a business man whose wife was a member of the church, but who said he did not come out as a convert because of her temper. At last I told her the plain truth. We prayed

about it. She confessed the fault, and determined to conquer. At spring-cleaning time—and we all know what it is—she put up a beautiful new hanging lamp in the hall as a surprise for John. He was a great fisherman. He had brought three or four new rods, came in with them on his shoulder—and down came the lamp!

Mary was at the top of the stairs. John waited for an explosion. She did not say one angry word. "Well," said John, "if Jesus has saved you like that, I'll join the church next Sunday!" And he did.

I was conducting a mission at Lincoln some time ago, and a man who was converted went back to his work at one of the foundries. His mates were determined to make him swear. When they failed, they heated a bar of iron, let the redness go out, and then handed it to him to carry to somebody, so that his hand was badly burned.

All he said was, "Mates, I wouldn't serve you like that," and he began to sing, "I'm not ashamed to own my Lord." One of the men said to me afterwards, "We all slunk away ashamed like so many beaten curs."

One Sunday morning I was going round the slums of one of the Pottery towns at three o'clock in the morning accompanied by two policemen in private clothes. I went into a common lodging-house and in one room saw twenty-six tramps. I forgot the policemen, and as I thought of the mothers of these boys I prayed a little prayer for them. Some rubbed their eyes and sat up, saying, "What's this?" Others began to curse because they were disturbed, and the policeman advised me to move on. One of the men, however, got to know who I was, and came to my service. I saw him leaning against a pillar, weeping.

I went down to him. He told me he was the son of

a missionary in London, whom I knew well. He said he had broken his mother's heart and had deserted his wife and child. He himself had been a schoolmaster, but had come down through drink.

I was on my knees with him for two solid hours. I took him home with me, gave him a bath, tucked him up in bed and kissed him for his mother. He came to Jesus, singing—

“Jesus weeps, and loves me still.”

The last time I saw him he had joined his wife and child, and was district superintendent for an insurance company.

One Friday night when I was in the middle of a mission in a provincial city I received a long letter. It told a sorrowful, sad story of a life blighted, a life Christless. The writer said, “I am hungry for God. Won't you pray for me? I fear my case is hopeless.” I held the letter up in my hand and said, “If the writer of this letter is present, will he speak to me at the close? I will wait for him in the vestry behind the pulpit.” I waited for half an hour, with the hope that the man would reveal himself. I waited in vain.

On the Sunday morning, when I got to the crowded church, the officials, as they met me in the vestry, said, “There is a man in the vestry who wants to see you. He seems in great distress.” I had forgotten that letter of Friday night under the responsibility of the great crowds that were flocking to hear the word of God, and when I got into that room, there was a fine, handsome man waiting for me.

As I entered he fastened the door behind me, and said, “I am the writer of that letter you received on Friday. You told me in your sermon to slay utterly.” I said,

"Yes. No compromise." "You told me the surrender must be absolute," he said. "Yes," I replied, "and so it must; if you are to have any peace out of your surrender, your surrender must be honest and earnest and intelligent and complete, with no reservation."

"I have a story to tell you," he said. "Twenty-five years ago I was a gambler, and I got into a tight place. I had the keeping of the books of the firm that I am still with. I have been with the firm for thirty years, and I have the money and the ledger and the bank books to look after. I took £100 of my master's money, and I never have been able to pay it back. I so cooked the books that they never have found me out, they have never discovered me; but for twenty-five years that has been on my conscience. It has haunted me like a ghost. I dream of it. It has prevented my feeling like a man; it has been a black spot on my career and on my conscience, and between me and my God. Three times I have wanted to join the church. I have wanted to be a good man. But each time that I presented myself as a candidate for church membership it seemed as though that hundred pounds came out and stormed in front of me with its claws, and its ugly face, and said, 'You are a defaulter and a gambler, you cannot enter here.'"

"You told me," he continued, "to slay utterly." I said, "Yes." He said, "That means gaol, if it means confession." I said, "Stop a minute. The sin was against God. It was God first. The sin wasn't against your master, it was God who said, 'Thou shalt not steal.' The sin was against God. It wasn't first against your master. It wasn't first against your wife, or your family. It was against God, and you have got to get right with God. Put God where He ought to be. Listen to God.

Obey God and leave the rest, prison or no prison, disgrace or no disgrace, put God first!"

I think I see him now. He fell on his knees, at the form in front of me, and he put his hands together, and in the agony of his spirit, he cried out, "Thou God of my mother, my mother's God, the God of my childhood and my cradle, the God that I loved when I was a youth, before I got astray, before I was corrupted by evil, O God of my mother, have mercy on me!"

It does not take long for God to still the tempest of a human soul, when a soul comes to that extremity. Quicker than it takes me to write the fact, the storm was hushed in that man's heart and life; God had spoken to him.

He got up from his knees, and he said, "Well, sir, what do you advise next? I said, "Does the head of the firm still come to business? He said, "Yes, we were young fellows together, and we have grown up together. He comes every morning at ten o'clock." I said, "You ask for an interview with him tomorrow at ten. If he has kept you thirty years, and if you have served him thirty years, and twenty-five of them with this on your conscience, he will give you a chance. You ask for the interview, and tell him everything, and I will be praying for you at ten o'clock tomorrow. When you get that interview, tell the truth. Uncover everything. Keep nothing back. Tell him how you took the money, and cooked the books. Tell him something of the suffering, the agony of twenty-five years. Tell him you tried to be a good man, and wanted to join the church, and could not, because that was on your conscience. Tell him something about your nine children, and your wife that is delicate. Tell him, and then say when you are through,

'If you can have pity on my family, take so much off my salary till the whole thing is straightened out, but if you cannot find it in your heart to do that, then I am ready for gaol, because I have got to play the game.' "

At half past five that evening I was on the lookout from the drawing room window of the house where I was staying and I saw him coming. I rushed to the door and called him, and he stumbled up that pathway, and when he reached the steps he threw his arms about my neck, and I am not ashamed to tell you that my tears were mingled with his. He said, "Oh, sir, God is better than my fear. I told my master everything. I kept nothing back. I told him all. And when I had finished, he got up from his chair, for he was weeping, and he said, 'Herbert, take my hand. From this day we are friends. I will not only forgive you, but I will raise your salary from to-day.' "

I remember a remarkable incident at one of my meetings for men from the public houses. Scores of the audience were more or less under the influence of alcohol. Twenty or thirty people were on their feet at once, wanting to sing, wanting to talk. My daughter saw that crowd, the first time in her life she had seen an element of that sort, and it frightened her, and she began to weep. She sat on the platform behind me, and she said, "Daddy, daddy, what can you do with these?" I said, "Nothing, dear, but Jesus can work miracles. Pray for me. Pray for me." I said, "I want you to help me sing presently. You pray for me. It will be all right. Don't you fear, it is all right. God is here, and He will work wonders with these people."

I looked around for an ally in all that group of sodden men and women, I looked for somebody to help me;

and on the front row sat a man with his hat on the back of his neck, a cigar in the corner of his mouth. He was under the influence of liquor. I said to myself, "That is my man. That is my man." I looked at him, and I said, "I want you. I want you." He said, "Me, Governor?" I said, "Yes, I want you." He said, "You don't mean me? I said, "I mean you. You are the very man." He took off his hat. The manhood in him was having a resurrection as I was appealing to him. I said, "I want you, God wants you, and I want you myself, just now." He said again, "Governor, you can't mean me." I repeated, "Yes, I want you." He put down his cigar, and got up, and said, "What do you want me to do? I said, "I want you to help me keep quiet this unruly crowd, I want you to help me. Get up and tell these people to be quiet."

He was over six feet in height. He stood up and straightened himself and cried, "Order, order!" Every man flopped into his seat, and every woman sat down. He said, "Listen! I am with this bloke, and if you say anything to him you have got me to reckon with. I am on the job." I had no more need to call for quiet. I had picked out the worst man in that town, and didn't know it. I had picked out the biggest sinner, the greatest blackguard, the greatest drunkard and didn't know it. But God was helping me to win that man. "Now," I said, "my daughter and I will sing for you," and immediately we began to sing to that wonderful tune Rockingham, "When I survey the wondrous cross."

And when we sang the second verse

"See, from His head, His hands, His feet,  
Sorrow and love mingled down,"

my friend buried his face in his hands, and said, "That is my mother's hymn. She taught me to sing that when I was a child." He was converted that night, and fifty others of that crowd with him. God saved the worst men and women in that service. I picked out the worst, and I won him by asking him to do something for me. Did not Jesus win the poor woman of Samaria by saying, "Give me to drink?"

A young man who had charge of the enquiry room workers in a certain mission, came himself to ask for guidance. "When I was seventeen," this young man said, "the minister said, 'Harry, you must join the church. Your father and mother are members and if you don't join what will all the other young fellows think?' I joined, and they made me an office-bearer, and I was asked to take charge of the enquiry rooms, but not one soul has yet had the courage to look me in the face and say, 'Harry, are you right with God?'"

At Grimsby once I said, "If you can get two opposites like Peter and John at a prayer meeting, you will have a revival. Have you found your Peter?"

In the vestry the official who helped me on with my coat said, "My Peter is an office-bearer to whom I have not spoken for five years, and I'm going to find him before I have my tea." That night they sat together.

I remember once seeing an unhappy woman hovering about the enquiry room. I asked her what was the trouble? She replied, "It's as much her fault as mine!" I told her until she had forgiven she could not be forgiven. When I saw her again she was radiant. "I wrote the letter," she said, "and the very sound of it falling into the letter-box has filled my heart with joy."

At one of my services there was an uncomfortable

looking lady in a back pew. (Some day I want to preach on the Parable of the Back Pew.) If there hadn't been a wall there, she would have got further back still. As I preached she suddenly came to the communion-rail, and said, loud enough for everybody to hear, "I give in, and I am going to be friendly." Two women, it appeared, had formed two parties, nearly breaking the preacher's heart and turning his hair grey. And it all began at a sewing meeting!

I was asked to spend a "holiday" in a certain town, preaching every night, and three times on Sunday. The church was a beautiful one, but I found I could make little impression. Three nights I went home to spend a sleepless night wondering why things were wrong. The next night in the middle of the service I suddenly closed the Bible and said, "It is no use. I'm through; I cannot stay in an atmosphere that is not conducive to blessing. Something is wrong, and I cannot see that it is in me." Moving to the pastor, I said, "Is it you, or the people, or both?"

There was consternation in the church, and after a pause the minister got up and with tears in his eyes said, "God must have inspired you, Gipsy; there is something wrong, and I am as much to blame as my people. At the last church meeting we had a quarrel, and we had been fighting ever since, tearing one another to shreds."

The sin was confessed, the atmosphere changed, I did not go home, and a revival broke out, the first person to come out being the daughter of the minister, who presided at the organ and who was followed by all the members of the choir.

A lady sent for me once and said, "I have been to hear all the evangelists, and have bought many books,

but in ten years I have not found peace, so I want to talk with you." I said, "Madam, you have made one more blunder. All you want is five minutes' definite talk with Jesus Christ."

A young lady at one of my meetings came to me and said: "Gipsy Smith, I want to be a Christian but the world pulls and I don't deny it. I know I ought to give myself to Jesus. Suppose I get religion shall I have to give up these girls?" And she pointed to a group of girls who were near by.

"No," I said.

"What, then?" she asked.

"If you get properly converted they will give you up," I told her. "They will cut your company quick or they will want Christ. They will either come to your Jesus or they will give you up, and you know it."

Later on she came to me again, full of joy. Every one of those girl friends had chosen with her, "the better part."

At one of the early midnight meetings at Sunderland we got hold of nearly a thousand people who were more or less under the influence of drink. Next morning a man walked into one of the big stores in the town and asked to see the proprietor. On being taken into the office he undid a brown paper parcel and took out a hand saw. "Do you recognise that, sir?" he said. "Why," said the proprietor, "I do. It was stolen, with a bag of seed and a bag of shot last July, and I have never been able to trace the thief." "I am the thief, sir," said the man. "I sold the seed and the shot, and I spent the money in drink, all except this"—and he laid a five shilling piece on the table. "Now," he added, "You have your saw and this five shillings. You can tell the police,

for I am ready to go to gaol." "First of all," said the merchant, "I must know more about you. What has led you to come here like this?" "Last night," replied the man, "I was half drunk. Somebody came to the beer-shop and gave me this card of invitation to the mission. I went to the midnight meeting, and when I got there they began to sing 'When I survey the wondrous cross.' It near broke my heart. I was reminded of my mother, and of the Christian home in which I was brought up. I was converted. I have scarcely slept for joy, and I have lost a quarter this morning because I had to come and see you." The merchant held out his hand. "My dear fellow," he said, "do you know I was a worker in the meeting last night? If God has forgiven you, shall not I? But I will take this five shilling piece, and Gipsy Smith shall have it, so that everywhere he goes he may hold it up and tell the story as an encouragement to any other man who may be in similar circumstances." The coin was sent to me. For years I never went anywhere without it. At hundreds of meetings I held it up and gave the story, and it was the means of saving many a man who had been playing the fool. I have it now.

## CHAPTER XVI

### A WORD ABOUT REVIVAL.—THE PLACE OF THE PRAYER MEETING.—THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.

I THINK I may say of all the forty years that my methods have never been sensational. There have been dramatic incidents, but no dramatic effect was designed by me. I was preaching, for example, in the Victoria Hall, Sheffield, and called for cheers for various workers, the choir stewards and so on; a thing I generally do once during a mission, for I do not believe in keeping all the flowers for the funeral of my friends. Someone in the gallery, when the applause died away, cried, "Now one for Jesus!" There was a tremendous cheer. I joined in it, and we struck up "Crown Him Lord of All." It was a great scene. Exactly the same thing occurred at Hanley. There 4,000 people not only applauded the name of the Master rapturously, but spontaneously rose and sang, first, the Doxology and then "Crown Him." Unconventional I know—but it was sincere. I believe the praise would be accepted in the spirit in which it was offered. Surely if the trees of the field clap their hands in praise and thanksgiving, I may.

During one recent mission I received intimation that certain critics objected to applause with which we greeted delegations, some of whom had come thirty or forty miles. The only effect of the protest was that the audi-

ences applauded more loudly than before. I must explain that all this was at the beginning of the meetings. Applause during the address is a thing I myself dislike exceedingly, and check wherever possible. I am not after hands, but after hearts. In some parts of the country, particularly where good old-fashioned Methodism is strong, responses are very fervent. They may help a preacher; they may hinder him. If an enthusiastic brother shouts "Hallelujah" too often and too noisily, I invariably remind him that if he is quieter I shall have a better chance with the man I am not so sure of. Sometimes it may be a case of, "much cry, little wool." I judge a listener's appreciation not by his cries of approval, but by his readiness to respond when I appeal for a little bit of practical Christian service. The longer I live the more astonished I am at the reluctance of Christian people to testify concerning their own experience. If only they could summon up courage to say to some lonely neighbour, "I love Him, do you?" the results would amaze them.

There are two or three kinds of people in the Church. You can put them in these three classes: Those who, if you ask them if they are converted, say, "I hope I am." You never hear a man say, "I hope I am married." He knows it. So does his wife. Then there is the second class. If you ask them the question, they will say, "I would not like to be too sure, but I think I am." You never heard a man say, "I think I have had my dinner." As though any man could come into saving, regenerating contact with the Son of God without knowing it. He knows. The blind man said, "One thing I know." Then there is a third class of people—the people who keep the church fires alive, the people who

*know.* The people who keep the prayer-meetings of the Church alive; the people who are certain of their sins forgiven. I have heard men and women sing:

“’Tis a point I long to know,  
Oft it causes anxious thought,  
Do I love the Lord or no,  
Am I His or am I not?”

I never could sing such nonsense. Supposing I were to write home from some city to-morrow morning to my wife in Cambridge, and say:

“’Tis a point I long to know,  
Oft it causes anxious thought,  
Am I yours, or am I not?”

I should get a telegram, and she would say, “Come home at once!” Why insult God with such rubbish? We know if we love or not. We know if we love a person, and we know if we love God.

I was preaching in one of our home cities some time ago, and at the close of the meeting a lady came to me and said, “Do you know that we have an encampment of Gipsies out in one of the suburbs? Would you like to see them?” I said, “I will gladly go to see them, if they are there.” She come next morning and took me in her motor car to the encampment. We got to a little rise in the road where I could see the wagons and the tents, and I turned to her and said, “There is not a Gipsy there.” “But there are wagons and tents,” she said. “Yes,” I said, “but they are not gipsy wagons. A Gipsy would not have tents or wagons like that.” She said,

"I am surprised, I thought all the people living in wagons were Gipsies." I said, "Wait and see."

When we got to the encampment we alighted and I walked in and began to speak in my mother tongue, Romany. Hearing a strange voice, they looked at me, but they did not understand a word I was saying. There was one woman amongst them who had got herself up as well as she could as a Gipsy, but her colours were badly mixed. She said, "I know you, you are the Gipsy preacher." I said, "You are not a Gipsy." "No," she said, "I wasn't born one, I just *joined* them." I said, "No, if you had been born one you would have understood my language."

When in the Potteries recently a similar incident happened. I was being taken by Mr. William Machin into the country and we saw some encampments by the roadside. "Gipsies," said my host. "Wait a minute," I said as we stopped, and I called to one of the men in the Romany tongue. He stared vacantly. "Don't you understand?" I said, "Aren't you a Gipsy?" "Well," he replied smiling, "I'm *supposed* to be one."

I have been feeling the pulse of the Church's life for many years, and I say with sorrow that tens of thousands of people in the churches are just living on supposition. What we want to-day is simply—*reality*. There are too many Christian people who want to fight with the sort of gun that explodes and blows nobody up. There are plenty of people who want to attack the devil with a tract in one hand and a scent bottle in the other! I can praise the Lord when people get converted in the Salvation Army Barracks, or in any other place. I cannot understand John going to the Master and saying, "Master, we saw men casting out devils in Thy name and we

stopped him." "What did you stop him for, John?" I imagine John saying, "Oh, because he did not sing out of your hymn book. He was not on our plan. He was not ordained. He was a Gipsy!"

Men of all ages, of all creeds, of all schools of thought, have stood shoulder to shoulder on my platforms. I rejoice to think that such unity of feeling and purpose has made Christian work in many centres easier and more effective. Surely any man is a fool who tries to divide the Lord's people, when there is so much to unite them. I have never written articles or made speeches on the problems of reunion—that is not in my line. At scores of missions Anglicans, Methodists, Congregationalists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Brethren, Quakers, Salvationists, have been linked in a happy fellowship—that is what I wish to see and what I believe will help to answer the prayer of the Master, "that they may be one."

I still hold to the view that I expressed at the Methodist Conference of 1921, when the problem of Methodist union was discussed. One thing is certain. The question will never be settled until we begin to pray. We shall never discuss ourselves into it, never! We talk too much and pray too little. The way to learn the mind of God is to wait on Him. The brave boys who fought for us in France laid down all their differences for one common end. Can the Church do less?

We are going to live together in Heaven, and I propose to learn how down here. I don't want the angels to discover when I get there that I have been badly bred, that there is a coarse strain in my spiritual make-up. What is the good of talking about Union unless we practise it? The man-in-the-street will believe we mean it when he sees us doing it.

When we get to Heaven we shall get three surprises. The first will be the people whom we never expected to see there; the second will be the folk who are missing and whom we expected to see there; the third, the biggest surprise of all, will be to find oneself there.

Once when I was on a liner coming over from America a man said to me, "You know my church is *the* church." I said, "If you have a bath-tub in your suite, go and fill it with water and call it *the* ocean!"

My gipsy tent, I have always said, was a cathedral when Jesus was in it. Without Jesus, St. Paul's Cathedral would only be a glorified quarry.

Of course, I know the Church is not perfect. If it was, I should not be in it. If a man can improve it let him come inside and do it. If you want a perfect church, go to some South Sea Island where there is not a living soul, and found one. It won't be perfect five minutes after you get there. But what is it that turns a preacher's hair grey, bends his back, takes the heart out of him, makes blunt the edge of his sword? It is the inconsistency of the people in his flock.

When I was spending six months on the Pacific Coast, I observed in certain sections of that country that mistletoe grows profusely on many trees. Tree after tree I saw bearing great growths of the parasite. In my country it is a little more particular where it grows. But it is a parasite. It asks for life, it asks for a lift, for a place to live, for sustenance, but it never changes its nature. It is always mistletoe and it will suck the life out of the tree on which it grows. In those western sections, it multiplies upon the trees and finally it kills them. It requires all of their sap to feed itself. There are multitudes in the churches who are just like that

mistletoe. They want the dignity the Church can give them, but they don't want the life. I wish I could shake them from their hold and make them fall at the feet of Jesus.

God help the church that becomes a mere social club, a league, a guild. God help the man who sings "Rescue the Perishing" in a cushioned pew, but never dreams of going out in the rain to rescue the men in the public houses. Too many want an easy, superficial, jazzy religion. Some people even want a picture show to get them to a church.

I know many of the great preachers of the world, and have been in touch with them for forty years. There have been decades when we have had fewer preachers who stood out like great mountain peaks, but we have a galaxy of preachers to-day. On the average they are on a higher altitude than those of the past. Many people do not realise the vastness of their riches in the pulpit, because they have no appetite. Nothing creates an appetite for a sermon like a real bit of service. Too many suffer from spiritual dyspepsia. There never was a time when there were so many fine preachers. Yet I have known a church to fill a schoolroom on a winter's night for an improvement society discussion on a potato, and fail to get a corporal's guard for a prayer meeting!

Religious demonstrations can be religious dissipations. When a man goes to church and does not get good, or pass on good, he is worse than if he never went at all. It is the Church's business to cast out devils. It is no use talking about intellectual or cultured or poetic preaching; the only preaching the New Testament recognises is Jesus Christ and Him crucified. So-called Christian people who are intoxicated and saturated with a pleasure-

loving spirit will never move the world. We can talk, we can preach, we can sing, we border on the æsthetic, we have more organisation, more complete machinery, but where is the prayer-meeting? We fill churches and schools with dramatic performances. We fill our lecture rooms with any trumpery thing that is not spiritual. How many of the church members are regular in attendance at the prayer meeting?

I remember an old Gipsy uncle of mine. I was converted and I wanted him to be, but I dared not preach to him. I was young and he was old. One day I went to him and I said, "Uncle, look at my knickerbockers," and I showed him one of the knees which was worn out, and the best knee first. He said, "My, how they are worn!" Then I showed the other knee, worse worn, and he said, "How did you do that?" And I said, "Praying for you." He looked at me and his eyes filled up. "It is time for me to pray for myself," he said. And he began to pray.

When I began my ministry I had the notion that sinners were to be converted every time I preached. Was I right or wrong? The first time I went to preach I had to walk five miles to the little place where the service was to be held. I knelt and prayed at every milestone I passed. I got so excited at the last milestone that I said, "Lord, if you don't save somebody to-day I will." The Lord knew my ignorance and my zeal and he knew I meant right. He did save somebody that day, and that somebody became a preacher.

All church workers ought to save souls—preachers, elders, Sunday school teachers. If they were only as earnest as I was that day they would do so.

The trouble with most people is that they would rather

have almost any quack or any cult than God's own remedy. There are people who listen to me night after night and who have run after every preacher who has come to the city for the last twenty years. Pretty nearly all the religion they have is in the heels of their boots! If a strange preacher comes next week, they will be in the front seats. It isn't Moses they need, or Elijah, or Gipsy Smith—it is Christ. I say the Church has no lack of fine preachers, or of good music. Why, when I started preaching, our mission halls were miserable places in back streets, with the windows broken, with crazy forms, with hymn-books with the backs off, with an asthmatical, broken-winded, one pedalled harmonium! If the swell chapel had an old organ—send it down to the mission-room. If they had worn-out hymn-books—send them to the mission. If you had a local preacher—a Gipsy Smith—that you didn't care about at the swell church, sent him to the mission. All that is changed. The best preacher, the best central halls, are for the crowd. We never had such a magnificent machinery. But where is the prayer-meeting?

I stood on the upper deck of the *Mauretania* before she was launched. Later on I sailed on her. When the *Mauretania* was on the ocean she was a thing of beauty, but if the water got in the *Mauretania* she would not be very beautiful, would she? When the world is in the Church, there is danger. When the Church is in the world and she is functioning it is a sight to make the angels thrill to the tips of their wings, but when the world gets into the Church—God help the Church!

If God comes and moves a town nearer to Him, it will not be because an evangelist is there, but because of prayer. I don't carry revival about with me in my

portmanteau. I am no magician. I have no tricks. I am no conjurer.

If the Church will only bring back the prayer-meeting, there will be a revival that will shake England!

Ignorant, superficial, and flippant people say they don't believe in revivals. Thoughtful people don't talk that way. In a swell drawing-room a young lady said, "My father, who is a professor, doesn't believe in revivals." I said, "Madam, your father and the devil agree!" Jesus hung between two thieves to make revival possible. The person who says, "I don't believe in revival," is saying, "I have no sympathy with Jesus Christ."

The world is always trying to dodge Good Friday, but it is eager enough to have flowers and new clothes on Easter Sunday. They forget there can be no Easter without Good Friday. People say to me, "Don't, please, make me uncomfortable and disturb me. Don't be crude and vulgar and sensational." But Jesus went through it all. "Can ye not watch with me for one hour?"

I was travelling once with two hard-working mission sisters. We were talking of what heaven would be like. "Oh," cried Sister Daisy, a frail, delicate woman, "just think that when I get there I can work and work for Jesus and never feel tired!" A great many people are getting tired jazzing and playing tennis. Social life nowadays is getting to be very hard work. How many ever tire themselves out in work for Jesus?

If there is a political election on, how we bring out our motor-cars and knock at the doors of people's houses! How we press them, and coax them, and fondle them, and pester them, until we make sure of them! Why are we not just as much in earnest to get people to vote for Jesus Christ? When we want a man's vote, we

take to his door an automobile decked out with ribbons, and we carry him off in it. When we want men to come to Jesus we—pull a bell!

There are people who say, "I don't believe in missions because I don't believe in excitement." Yet they believe in excitement in the football match and the cinema, and will pay for it. Other people say doubtfully, they hope the new converts will stand. You never hear a mother talk like that about a baby. She doesn't say, "I hope it will stand." She doesn't expect it to. She nurses it. When I tried to get our first baby to stand and he fell, I didn't call out, "Annie, he's down again!" I kissed him for falling and set him on his feet again. He walked all right in time—we knew it by the shoe leather he wore out! Let members of Christian churches give the converts a chance, and they will walk.

A friend went down into Wales at the time of the Welsh Revival, and in a little beer shop he managed to get a cup of tea, but nothing else, as the woman in charge told him everybody had gone to the Revival. "I don't believe in it myself," she said; "I believe in an ordinary religion, I do!" That is just where lots of us are. But the Bible believes in an extraordinary religion.

Once when I was on my way to address a great crowd in the Tremont Temple, Boston, which seated 3,000 people, a significant incident happened one night in a street car. Every time the car stopped, somebody got in who was going to the service. A lady sat by me with a pair of opera glasses in her hand.

People, you know, do not take opera glasses to church; they are not so anxious to see the preacher. A lady sitting opposite said to me, "Gipsy Smith, what are you going to preach about?" I replied, "Wait, madam, and

see. You can reckon on one thing, at any rate. There will be a great cry going up from about 3,000 people that God will send down upon us the Holy Ghost."

The lady with the opera glasses pulled her skirts closer to her, looked at me, and said, "Sir, if you pray like that, aren't you afraid something will happen?"

I said, "Madam, the curse of the Church is that people go and expect nothing to happen."

Some people say they don't believe in organising a revival. I defy anyone to organise a revival, any more than you can organise the spring. You can plant the seeds. That is in order. You can dig the soil, and plough. That is common-sense. You cannot do more. You can't make it grow. You can't work up a revival. You must leave it to the Holy Spirit. But any man may hinder a revival by unbelief and disobedience.

Politicians are praying for a revival, if it will only come their way. Business people are praying for a revival of trade, if it will only come to their shop. Working men pray for a revival, if only it will mean a better wage. We pray for a revival that will bring people to God, that will make awkward people lovable, difficult people sweet and winsome, crooked people straight, drunken people sober! And it is coming. The key to the situation of the world's salvation lies with the Church of God. We have got the key, and we don't know how to put it into the lock. We have to learn how. Sometimes people say to me, "Has this meeting pleased you? Aren't you satisfied?" No, I am not satisfied. I never have been. There is always something bigger, some higher ground, some wider vision, some greater victory.

Who objects to spring, to spring music and spring flowers with their promise of harvest and of plenty?

Would any sane person lift his voice in public and defiantly proclaim, "I do not believe in, and I refuse to have, spring?" Can anybody conceive what it would mean to the world if spring for once failed to come? A year without spring! What havoc! What ruin! What waste! A bare world—everything dry, no sap, no germination, no life, no new creation; not a bird nor a blossom; all nature stagnant; fields without grain, orchards without fruit, fountains and rivers dry; birds without young, flocks without lambs, herds without kine, meadows without grass, gardens without flowers, birds without song; no call of the cuckoo, no trill of the lark, no piping of the thrush, no harmony of the nightingale; a grey, dark, heavy, cold, lifeless sky; dearth and death everywhere! No spring! This would mean a world without bread, seeds without life, cities turned into cemeteries. But let spring smile. Then the seeds burst and the trees break into beauty and the green lush grass clothes the meadow, the woods burst into song, the lambs skip, the calves low, the children play merrily, the rainbow spans the sky, the orchards bow down their branches with fruit; there is beauty and promise of plenty everywhere. It is God's way of giving health and strength and soul to nature and to nations.

And what spring is in the world of nature grace is in the world of spirit. What the Church needs is a quickening, a renewal, a re-clothing; she needs to put on her beautiful garments. How can the birds help singing on a May morning when there is colour and perfume and glad, abundant, bursting, leaping life everywhere? Oh for a breath of the Holy Spirit, to give the new life of Pentecost!

## CHAPTER XVII

SOME STORIES GRAVE AND GAY.—CRITICS AND  
ANONYMOUS CORRESPONDENTS.—DOWN IN THE  
MINE.

IT NEED hardly be said that the homely illustrations I use when preaching are taken for the most part from my own experiences. I love good stories, and the more consecrated humour there is in them, the better. There is, for example, one story I am fond of telling about that wonderful man of faith, Billy Bray. Many years ago, when I was quite a young preacher, I was the guest in Cornwall of a dear old couple who entertained Billy Bray. They told me that one day Billy, when going along the road, suddenly gave a little skip as he often did, and cried, "Hallelujah! Father's just told me to build a chapel in a corner of that field!" Straightway he got a barrow and a shovel and began to dig for the foundations. The farmer who owned the land came along. "Hey! what's this?" Billy replied, "Father's told me to built a chapel here." "Oh, has he?" said the farmer. "Then I suppose it's all right. There's a horse and cart there you can use, and you can get stone from the quarry."

One day Billy looked shabby, and a lady said she would give him some clothes which had been her husband's, but she did not know if they would fit. "Did the Lord tell you to give them to me?" said Billy. "Yes," was the

reply. "Then," said Billy, with a skip, "they'll fit, for He knows my measure exactly."

I came across a real man the other day. He was leading lawyer in a little town, and bore an honoured name. On a cold morning I went with him to the railway station. I had to get into a little local train that would take me to the main line.

When the single porter of that little place brought two foot-warmers, my friend laid his hand on the man's shoulder and said affectionately, "Thank you very much indeed, I'll do something for you some day." The porter turned around, and tears came into his eyes. "Do something for me, sir? Everybody knows you are doing something for somebody every day of your life, and you make us think of Jesus every time you come near us!"

I had a friend in Cambridge, an ex-brewer. I got hold of him, and believe he found my Lord. We were great friends. He was an expert amateur gardener and poultry breeder.

"Look here, Gipsy," he said one day, "I have got a new setting of eggs. They are Rhode Islands, and I gave three guineas for the set. I am going to give them to that old hen yonder, for she is my favourite." When he had deposited the eggs in the nest and had gone away, I got a common or garden egg, and put it with the rest. When the chicks came, mine came just as well cared for as any of the three guinea lot. The old hen was as proud of the common little thing as of the expensive prize sort, and took it under her wings just the same. It is hardly necessary here to add the application of that story!

I have a friend in Sunderland, a successful business man. I was his guest, and he had a beautiful home and several servants. He had a Bible-class of a hundred and

fifty on Sunday afternoon. His doctor told him that he could not carry on his heavy work in the city and his religious work as well.

"Well," said my friend, "if something has to be cut off, I shall have to let my business go, and do with a smaller house and less money." If you go to Sunderland to-day, I believe you will find my friend, instead of having a hundred and fifty, has about a thousand in his Bible-class, and his wife has seven hundred women in her Bible-class.

Sometimes humour and pathos are strangely mingled. I once called a rather fussy church official to the rostrum, and asked him to help, more enquiry-room workers being wanted. He said, "I'll go for Brother——." I said, "No; you." He said, "Oh, I'm not used to it." I asked, "Aren't you a Christian?" "Well," he replied, "I've been one on and off——." More off than on, thought I!

When I was at Plymouth recently, a faithful dog—almost as intelligent as a human being—sat by me in the Drill Hall. It had come some distance with some young men, and refused to return. No dog in a Scottish kirk was ever quieter or better behaved. This one, curiously enough, was named "Gyp." At the close of the meeting it made friends, and four thousand people gave the animal a cheer when I remarked, "There's nothing dogmatic about you, old chap!"

Here, by the way, is a conversation between two working men overheard at Plymouth by the Secretary of my Mission.

"Have you heard 'm?"

"Yes. Been twice."

"Like it?"

"Aye. Aren't you a' coming? You shude."

"No, not me."

"Why?"

"Cos if I do I'll get converted."

You see, if they come anywhere near me they know what to expect!

At Devonport a dear old lady, who remembered me in my youthful days there, came up to speak to me. Her first words were, "My word, Gipsy, and how you'm fallen abroad!"

I have often experienced difficulty in getting into my own meetings. Once when I was in Sheffield, a policeman at the door asked Mr. McNeal, "How many wives has this preacher got? There's six Mrs. Gipsy Smiths got in already. I reckon they need converting. So I let them in!"

One of the funniest things I ever saw occurred when I was giving my lifestory at Manchester, a typical New England city. There was a man who sat with a heavy overcoat on during an hour and a half. When I paused for breath and asked the audience, "Have you had enough?" this man, in full view of the people, solemnly rose and took off the coat and settled down, saying, "Now for some more." The congregation shook with laughter.

On a wild stormy night I was about to preach in Plymouth Drill Hall when a friend climbed on to the press table and whispered, "Don't get the wind-up, but the lifeboat rocket is kept just at the back of the hall, and may go off while you are speaking." We sang at once the hymn for those in peril on the sea. Fortunately, the rocket was not required. One had to be ready for anything in a big crowd, and know just what to do.

I have had much criticism hurled at me, and of course I have deserved a good deal of it—and, I hope, have

profited by it. I don't think, however, I have had more than one really serious attack made upon me by a brother preacher. It was at Denver, Colorado. He was an elderly man, who was not on my committee. When the mission was over he brought three charges against me: 1. I was repulsive to look at. 2. I did not know my Bible. 3. I could not preach. The papers were full of this broadside, and sent reporters to me to hear what I had to say about it. "Gentlemen," I said, "this is all I have to say. 1. I cannot see myself, so I am unable to judge whether I am repulsive or not. 2. I do not know my Bible as I want to know it, but I try to increase my knowledge every day. 3. I admit I never have preached to my own satisfaction, but I shall keep on trying, as long as people are willing to listen to me, and the Lord gives me blessing." The newspaper men seemed rather disappointed, but I had nothing more to say, except that I hoped the old minister's attack might do more good than harm—as I believe it did.

Times innumerable people have come asking me what I think of Christian Science, faith healing, and so on. I thank the Lord I am no quack, no faddist. I am never side-tracked, thank the Lord. To coin a word, I am not a "tangentest." I don't go off at a tangent after every irrelevant theory that some fakir sets out. I believe much suffering has been brought to human hearts by the nonsense taught about faith healing.

The faith healing that Jesus does I believe in. I don't believe the nonsense that people try to practice when they make a living out of it.

A man came to me the other day at an hotel and said, "I am a faith healer."

I looked at him for a moment and said, "Take those

glasses off, then, and don't wear spectacles—heal yourself.”

I looked at him a little longer and said: “I see you have gold teeth in your mouth; why didn't you give yourself some new teeth if you are a faith healer?”

He said, “Good morning.”

One day I was on my way to preach for Dr. Maclaren, and when I turned into a certain street, in Oxford Road, Manchester, where the church stood, I saw a number of young fellows lounging in front of a building. They were just “hanging about” smoking cigarettes. They were expounding to each other their ideas for the remodelling of the world and society. It is astounding what young men about twenty-one years of age can do in the way of correcting the world.

“Gipsy Smith is conducting at Dr. Maclaren's church to-night,” I said, “will you come and help?” I didn't have the success I had hoped for.

“No, thanks,” they said. “We aren't anxious to go to church.”

“How's that?” I asked.

“Nearly all are women who go to church,” they said.

I looked at them for a moment and then quietly said: “Yes, and it's nearly all men who go to gaol.” I left them to think it over.

In all my missions one of my chief aims has been to revive little Christian courtesies in the home; especially to reach the conscience of those husbands who, immersed in business cares, have ceased to offer all those tender little words and acts which before they got careless and hardened, gladdened the hearts of the wives they love. So many good women are hungry for the little word of appreciation. So many men fail to realise it.

I once knew a man of that sort. Matters of business on his side and cares of the world have made him blind to the love offered by his wife. He had lost the art of saying the tender thing. Once his wife made him a beautiful cake. She made it herself because she knew his liking for a particular kind of cake. She went into the kitchen and expended her energies, worked carefully and made herself very tired to prepare the delicacy. She did this, heartsick as she was. When he came home she gave him the cake. It was the kind he liked and he ate and ate and ate—and never said a word.

At last she couldn't stand it any longer. "Did you like the cake?" she asked. "Uh-huh," he said, adding curtly, "I'd ha' told you if anything were wrong with it." Isn't that like some men?

I once met a class leader who did not want a revival. "Don't you want some new members?" I asked the old man. "Nay," was the reply, "I've trouble enough wi' the old uns!"

Once when I was staying with a prominent Methodist M. P. his little nephew was introduced to me. He stared at me very hard and said, "Did you *really* steal little boys?"

I was going to America on a liner, and among my fellow passengers was a party of girls who had been "doing Europe"—in six weeks! One of them, as they sat near me, said, "Say, Saydie, did we do Rome?" "Rome? Rome?" replied Saydie, "I guess I don't remember. Wait a minute, yes I do! *Wasn't Rome the place where I bought those dandy red silk stockings?*"

The critics and scandalmongers are always busy. At one of my recent missions the secretary stated publicly that it was rumoured that I was getting a sovereign for

every person who went into the enquiry room! This created intense amusement. It has been stated that in this particular series of meetings over 23,000 people went into the enquiry rooms. Had that rumour been true I should certainly have drawn heavily upon the exchequer of the Wesleyan Methodist Home Mission Department. As a matter of fact, as was repeatedly explained, during these missions I came away from the towns where they were held no richer than I entered them, taking not one penny of the money given in the offertories. How I was provided for and why I was independent of the local support was, of course, not the business of the critics, and I plainly told them so.

I confess I do not very much care for making appeals for money. Once I tried to make a collection speech in connection with a cause I was trying to help, and when I got through somebody got up and said, "When Gipsy dies I'll preach his funeral sermon from the text, 'And the beggar died.' " I said, "Well, I don't mind if you do, only mind you finish the text: 'and was carried by angels unto Abraham's bosom!'"

I have, of course, received hundreds of anonymous letters. It is amazing to me that so many people should write, "Dear Brother, the Lord has told me to tell you so and so," but they have not been told by the Lord to have the decency to sign their names. All preachers know what an irritating nuisance these anonymous friends can be, but the wise man puts all such communications in his waste paper basket. Letters that are written openly and sincerely are, of course, given the attention they deserve, and honest criticism offered in a Christ-like spirit is never resented.

While at Newcastle recently I had an interesting ex-

perience, spending a whole morning deep underground in the workings of a big coal mine, and chatting with many miners while they were at their work. I will not pretend that I should often care to walk about two miles in low galleries of the mine in a crouching position. The frequent contact of one's head with overhead timbers and girders is hardly the best preparation for an afternoon service. Had I adopted the suggestion of a friend who accompanied me and walked through the streets to Brunswick Chapel just as I left the mine clad in greasy overalls and a little black jockey cap, and looking as black as a sweep it would have caused a sensation! Once during the back-aching journey through the mine I stumbled and fell and my light went out, but probably to the relief of a courteous manager I came up smiling and preached about an hour afterwards as usual. And next day I was told that on the day of my visit there was a record output.

I was reminded of an adventure of a similar kind which I had during the campaign in South Africa in 1904. I visited the diamond mines at Kimberley. A number of ministers and myself were dressed in borrowed clothes and looked like a gang of miners. No congregation would have recognised any of us. We went down into the bowels of the earth, 2,500 feet below into the various tunnels, levels and workings. We saw the boys at work, handled a pick and brought down some blue ground, but I cannot say that I secured a diamond. We stayed as long as we could endure the heat, for this was intense, then the cage was crowded with about a dozen of us once more, and as we rose from the depths of darkness into the pure clear light and sweet fresh air we all joined in singing "Count Your Blessings."

When I was at Devonport last I had a delightful ex-

perience conducting a service on board the training ship, H. M. S. *Defiance*. Mr. James Frederick Welsh, R.N., warrant-writer on the *Defiance*, who was a worker in my meetings, was in the battle of Jutland, and has received the distinction of an M. B. E. He is a United Methodist local preacher, and has been very successful in conducting mission services, having preached in some of the biggest halls in Australia. He is a warm-hearted, sunny-tempered, consistent follower of the Master, and has an influence on all with whom he comes into contact.

As we went in a smart pinnace at a good pace along that fascinating stretch of water, the harbour known as the Hamoaze, in a stiff breeze, with battleships, torpedo-boat destroyers, and submarines on either side of us, and so many famous ships to see that it is impossible to mention them, suddenly from the deck of a big ship on our left there was a flash and a bang . . . then another . . . and another. . . . It was *not* a salute for me! It happened that the First Lord of the Admiralty was on a tour of inspection, and had been visiting the ship to which we were going.

We came to the River Lynher, and saw the *Defiance*. Rarely do we see such a picturesque specimen of the wooden walls of old England. She was built in 1861, being the ninth *Defiance*, and her predecessors had glorious histories. The ship which we now boarded is the torpedo school of the Devonport Division. On her there are between seven and eight hundred men, ranging in age from eighteen to forty. The younger men receive instruction in all matters connected with electricity, mines, torpedoes and so on. Lying by the *Defiance*, and all connected with the school, are three other ships, the *Inconstant*, the *Spartan*, and the *Cleopatra*.

We went into the chaplain's room and met the Rev. Arthur T. B. Baker, B. A., who very gladly arranged for a special service meeting. We crossed over to the *Inconstant*, and the meeting was held in a little theatre, which was quickly crowded by the men. Up went the curtain, and in the centre of the little stage I looked upon a glorious company of smart, alert young bluejackets who were perched on forms and anywhere where they could get a footing. Best of all, Captain Aubrey Lambert, Commander A. Lovett-Cameron, and many other distinguished naval officers came to give their support, following the service with keen and sympathetic attention. I sang and spoke to the men. Several of them afterwards wrote that they were influenced. Later on we had a quiet little prayer meeting in the chaplain's cabin. It was a time of great refreshing.

I pride myself on the fact that I have only missed a train once in my life. I do not think I am ever late for a meeting. The wrist-watch I carry is invaluable. I do not think anyone has ever complained that I have spoken too long. I am reminded of the first watch that came to my gipsy home. My father did not "find" it. I am particular about saying that, because when I once told the story in America a lady asked me if my father "found" that watch. Gipsies may be good "finders," but my father didn't "find" that watch; I think it was a gift. It was an old thing, but it was a watch, and it kept time in a way. He didn't know quite how to manage it. As we moved through the country we would come up to some place and he would see a clock and he would look at the watch and he would say, "I am ten minutes too slow," and then he would move it on, and in three or four days he would go to some other place and look at the clock, and he would

say, "I am a quarter of an hour fast"; and he would turn it back. He went on like that until the old watch did the only thing it could do—it stopped.

There are lots of people in our churches who are like that watch in church. They are too fast sometimes and too slow other times. Then they stop. It is all because they do not keep their eyes on Jesus. They look too much at other people, timing their religion by what others do.

A pathetic incident occurred when I was preaching in the Tremont Temple at Boston. The *Boston Journal* described it as follows: "Trembling with the emotions of a new-found hope, two blind girls from the Perkins Institution for the Blind led the procession of converts. From every portion of the huge auditorium suppressed sobs were audible as with encouraging words the evangelist received them. Those nearby almost held their breath as the act that meant so much to the blind pair was consummated. It was a dramatic moment and when all was over, when the vast assemblage had given a helpful prayer for the two bereft of sight, and the speaker had given his 'God bless you,' all leaned back in their seats with a sigh of relief. They realised that such a conversion meant worlds to the girls whose only comfort is within themselves." I remember at one of my more recent meetings there were two men in the gallery who had been blinded in the war. As soon as I began to speak they were heard to say, "Eh, it's him right enough. We heard him in France, and we could tell that voice anywhere."

A dear old uncle of mine came to Jesus at ninety-nine, and Jesus saved him. He went to Heaven when he was 101. He was blind. He took my father's hand and he said, "My dear, when I was able to see I was blind.

Now I am blind, I can see, and what I do see is that Jesus is my utmost Saviour."

During the war, coming home from France on leave, I arrived at a London terminus where I had to change trains. An elderly porter seized my heavy kit-bag. "No, no," I said, "it's too much for you." The man insisted, so I took the heavier end. When I was safely seated in the railway carriage I shook the hand of the genial man, and left, of course, something in it. Then I said, "Good day, and I hope you love Jesus." The effect surprised me. "Well, sir," said the porter, "I have been here for thirty years, and I have carried bags for thousands, Christians and the other sort, and amongst them have been many parsons, but you are the very first man to recognise that I have a soul. I'm much obliged to you, sir, for what you've said, and I sha'n't forget it."

A similar incident happened when I was in a Midland town recently. After I had left a hotel, a woman who was employed in the office said to a minister, "I had been here for years and no one on earth seemed to care a rap whether I had a soul or not, but the Gipsy, as he greeted me in passing, said a word about Jesus, and it went to my heart. I feel I can't forget it, and I have made up my mind I must come to church."

As I have said elsewhere, I do not believe in what I call the tactics of "the Lord's awkward squad." I am not suggesting for a moment that at any time or place it is fitting to button-hole people with a personal question. Yet it seems to me, if only more professing Christians could summon up courage to say just one affectionate word to lonely souls with whom they come into contact in the work-a-day world, there would be an amazing harvest. Why *are* so many Christians tongue-tied? I can-

not make it out. Scores of times from a platform when I have been making an appeal for decision for the Master I have urgently begged the members of churches, who rose so quickly to signify their own adherence, to say one word to the unconvinced, but only a few, comparatively, dared to respond. We need to be a bit more particular about saying the saving thing than about saying the smart thing.

In a theatre in which I was conducting a service in America, the leading actor, who had asked his company to wait, introduced the players to me. He said to me, "And how many are there in *your* company?" I said, "Just Jesus and me: that's all." "Ah," he added, "if you have my mother's Jesus, you need no other." All the theatrical company remained to the meeting, and most of them rose to ask for the prayers of those who loved God that they might live better lives.

Soon after I was converted I was on my rounds with my basket one day, and I sold to a lady a little Dutch oven which my father had made, also a little nail brush. When someone told her I was going to be a preacher, she said, "That brush shall never be used. I shall keep it in memory of my little Gipsy singing boy." She tied a piece of ribbon round it and hung it up in her little cottage. Twenty-five years afterward I was preaching in a crowded church in Cambridge, and an old gentleman came up to the pulpit steps and said, "My wife has got that brush yet; it is hanging on the wall and she wouldn't part with it for love or money." Then more years passed. I was preaching one of the opening sermons at a new Methodist church in London. The same old man was waiting for me. He came into the vestry and said, "She's gone Home, and I've brought you the brush." I asked the

officers to see that he had a good seat. I went into the pulpit, and instead of preaching the ordinary sermon, I simply told the story of the brush, pointing out that the old man was present. The congregation was deeply affected. The little brush, sold by the Gipsy boy nearly half a century ago, is on my study desk beside me as I write, looking almost as clean and new as it was when it was put into my basket.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE NEED OF THE PRESENT.—THE HOPE OF THE FUTURE.

I AM very anxious that nothing in this book should be construed as the vain boasting of a conceited man. I know I deserve a great deal of the criticism I receive. With all my blundering, I feel I have a right to be proud of the work God has permitted me to do. Since I find it difficult to write about my own characteristics, perhaps I may be pardoned for quoting what a distinguished preacher in America wrote on this point: "A characteristic which struck the Gipsy's hearers as pardonable and pleasant by reason of his superb freedom from disagreeable vanity was the naïve assumption of his own undoubted position and power in the Christian world. That he has had an extraordinary career and has attained great eminence as an evangelist no man in the world can dispute. Why should he not, then, accept it and take it for granted? To act on any other assumption would be ingenuine. No amount of laudation has spoiled him yet. He has not developed the haughty airs and independent manner that such adulation usually breeds. I don't think the man can be spoiled. 'I have dined at the Mansion House with the Archbishop of Canterbury,' he says, 'but it has no more effect on me than a mustard plaster on a wooden leg. I am the same Gipsy boy I was in the old tent.' He tells the truth about himself so far as he knows it, whether it

be for or against. He does not hesitate to call himself an unprofitable servant when he dwells on the goodness and grace of God. But he also tells what he believes to be the truth when he says with equal sincerity and simplicity, 'My friends, your education is not completed if you have not heard my lecture.' "

I am always ready to admit that I enjoy just a little bit of "fuss." Who doesn't? But I hate all forms of "swank" as much as I hate anything, and I am perfectly sure that if I ever did put on airs the Lord would pretty soon take them off again.

I have been preaching for more than forty-five years. If I live four more years I shall celebrate the jubilee of my ministry. I think I may claim that since Jesus came to my gipsy tent I have tried to be true to the main things. I have never changed my message. When the devil says, "You are not as good as you ought to be," I reply, "Yes, I know, but I'm not so bad as I was!"

Some time ago, when I was in the middle of preparing a sermon, I asked my wife to come in and answer a question. "Annie," I said, "I led you to Christ when I was quite a boy. I have led our children to Christ. You have known me in my worst moments. You know all my weaknesses. All I want you honestly to say is, as the days go by, do I remind you a little more of the Jesus whom I love?"

If my wife had given one answer, it would have broken my heart.

God knows that in my long ministry I have not consulted flesh and blood. I have sometimes been a very lonely man. I have left my family for fifteen years out of twenty. I have gone from a crowded service to my room, and I have shut myself up with a heart just hun-

gering for the touch of somebody's hand. I know its cost, but it is worth it. Sometimes I have gone to my bed too tired to pray. I could only throw myself on the bed and say, "Good night, blessed Jesus; we are on the same old terms."

For such success as I have been permitted to see in my work I want no credit. Those who give me the credit sin against the Holy Spirit. I am tired of hearing so much talk about "magnetic personality." God can use magnetism and God can use personality, but these are not the secret. What men call magnetism and personality Jesus called power from on high.

The world knows the difference between wholesome bread and a pretty basket to carry it in. The world knows the difference between a nosegay and a life-line. We have been trying to save the world by confectionery, when it needs Jesus. When I was a mere boy I drew a big crowd on Sunday to a certain building where the attraction of a week-day was "Pepper's Ghost." The proprietor of the latter show came to me on Sunday night and said, "I wish I could get the people into this place like you do. How is it done?" I said, "Well, you see, you have only 'Pepper's Ghost,' and I have the Holy Ghost." The world knows the difference. What we want in all our services is the Holy Spirit. I heard General Booth say once that he meant to belt the globe with the golden cable of the song of salvation, and he did it. He said he would get preachers from the beer-shop, and he did it. There are lots of preachers in the beer-shops at this moment. There are lots of preachers in gaol at this moment. What the Church has to do is to find them.

When I was in Atlanta I was taken over the battlefield which was the scene of one of the big battles of the

Civil War. I was told the story of a man in the ranks who was called Peter Apples. He did not know much about soldiering, except that when the command was given to advance he knew he had to move, and when Peter started he never came back unless he had got something. Once he started off and somehow found himself at the enemy's trench. He floored one or two with the butt-end of his rifle, then he collared one man by the scruff of his neck and hauled him over the ramparts into "no man's land," the enemy not daring to shoot for fear of hitting their own man. When Peter arrived with his capture his own officer said, "Where did you get him?" "Get him?" cried Peter, "why, there are lots of them. You could all have had one if you had wanted and gone for one." Yes, and members of our churches can all win one if they only desire it. They have only to go out after them. As I write, I receive a letter from one of the most brilliant preachers in Scotland, my friend, Rev. Herbert Simpson, M. A. A little while ago I preached to his wealthy congregation, which included quite a number of titled people. He tells me that after I had gone, a gifted actress, who had taken a leading part in many popular plays, but had retired from the stage, came to his study. She said her father and mother received blessing in my mission in March and now she wished to give herself to Christ, and to join the church. Other fashionable society women came in a similar way. They want something they can never find in the world. Oh, I have seen the sun break through and kiss the world into splendour and the flowers into bloom. I have seen the shadows flee before the golden dawn, but there is no sight on God's earth like that of the light of pardon and peace and joy breaking on one human face!

I just feel like the apostle Peter did after the miraculous

catch of fish, when he got a new view of the Master. He looked up into the Master's face, and he said, "I am not fit company for you any more. Depart from me, for I am a sinful man." I never felt more humble in my life. I have had so many gentle showers of revival rain down my cheeks. My heart has been soft and tender in the midst of all the wonderful things I have been permitted to see, and I only feel like saying, "Glory be to the Father, glory be to the Son, and glory be to the Holy Ghost." I dare not take any glory to myself.

I think again, as I close, of my dear woods, with all the glorious trees and flowers and soft woolly things, among which I spent the first seventeen years of my life. I learned things there which I know now were of God, though I had nobody then to interpret these wonderful secrets and beauties, the love of nature, the beauty of the bluebell, the sweetness of the primrose, the breath of the morning air. I know I used to see God there, by the way these things held me as a child, and unfolded their loveliness to me.

And then a great light and a great love touched my life—the love of God in Christ. I dedicated my all—such as I had—to His dear service and the service of my fellows. As I think of what he has allowed a gipsy boy to do, without school, or teacher or preacher or missionary, I am wondering if some who read my faltering words, some who have been endowed with greater opportunities and advantages that are stupendous, are doing just what the great Master would have them do. Remember, where there is a bigger deposit, God will expect a bigger return. I can imagine no worse hell than some day to meet with a disappointed Christ.

I would creep back again into my dear woods, with all

the music and the poetry and the hush of the night, the forest where I am so often in dreamland. Some day I shall be a child again, and I shall be back there, and in my childish vision I shall see my Master coming to me through the rustling leaves of my own dear woods, and I shall know—

“I was lost but Jesus found me—  
Found the sheep that went astray;  
Threw his loving arms around me,  
Drew me back into His way.”

I have lived in the sunshine of the spring and of the summer. I have lived in the golden browns of autumn, I have tasted the rigours of winter, but I see in the distance the dawn of a new day, a day that shall be eternal, and I move forward to meet it with one song, one theme on my lips: “Wonderful, wonderful Jesus!”

THE END





